Dualism(s) Revisited:

A Case Study of Daoist Internal Arts and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy

to Explore a Post-Cartesian Perspective of Embodiment

Vittorio Giovine

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Kent, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research

February 2018

Total word count: 98,466

Abstract

Addressing the persistence of the Cartesian paradigm in body studies, this thesis explores a *post-Cartesian* perspective of embodiment.

I theorise embodiment as a phenomenon possessing a *dual* character – i.e., a phenomenon located at the intersection of a pre-individual and individuated dimension, and thus characterised by both a relational/open-ended/processual nature and a differentiated/self-organising/structural aspect. I suggest that this dual character is reflected in two main ways of getting to know and acting in the world. One is an individuated/dichotomous mode of embodiment where the mind-body dualism is phenomenologically salient – I name it the *Being*. The other is a pre-individual/non-dichotomous mode of embodiment where dualism(s) vanish(es) from one's phenomenological field and mind and body are experienced as a *duality* in unity – I call it the *Becoming*.

I investigate these propositions by means of a case study constituted by two self-cultivation practices: Daoist Internal Arts and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy. Aiming at shifting from the Being to the Becoming, both practices engage with our phenomenological world by employing the strategy of *enveloping dualism(s)* in a wider non-dualist context. That is, both practices seek to *attune*, and thus experience the ontological unity of, the experiential dimensions constituting relationships like those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and representational and non-representational forms of knowledge.

In this way, conceived of as not separate at the ontological level while amenable to change at the epistemological level, these relationships are regulated by a principle of *dynamic correspondence* entailing that they can be experienced by the embodied agent as dualism(s) or dualities in unity, according to respectively dichotomous and non-dichotomous modes of embodiment. On this ground, embodiment is re-conceptualised as a dynamic *process of individuation* which can shift between different modes, each possessing different *degrees* of emergent properties and capacities for *agency*.

for Sabina and Rosario

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Those who believe in substantiality are like cows;

those who believe in emptiness are worse

(Saraha, c.9th century CE, in Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991: v)

Thesis Introduction

Conceived of as a concept through which the symbolic and the material, psychical interiority and corporeal exteriority, and cognition and affect acquire their univocity, the notion of embodiment promises to bridge the gap between mind and body which we inherited from Descartes – but to what extent does the notion fulfil its promise? The more I delved deeper into this question, the more I seemed to understand that, rather than having gone away, the Cartesian paradigm is often explained away in social theory. In this way, although acknowledged as mistaken, Descartes' dualistic theorising still appears to be subtly imbued in the same social theory which endorses an anti-Cartesian stance. It is on these premises that with the present study I wish to provide a contribution to a re-conceptualisation of embodiment able to transcend extant anti-Cartesian approaches to the body and further develop the advances made by the field of body studies into a *post-Cartesian* perspective.

To do so I have structured this thesis in three parts which are preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue. The prologue sets the scene for the rest of the study by making an analytical distinction *between* the erroneous Cartesian ontological claim of mind and body belonging to two different realms *and* the epistemological truths related to the relationship between mind and body. Here I contend that while mind and body are not two separate substances, our embodied experiences are characterised by a wide range of phenomenological differences, whose material and immaterial dimensions represent two exemplary variations. Put another way, I argue that while Descartes has greatly influenced the way we live out the mind-body relationship (indeed, to the extent that his paradigm still pervades contemporary anti-Cartesian theorising), the relationship itself is constitutive of the character of human embodiment. In this way, from its inception, the study employs an *ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist* theoretical framework.

Following the prologue, I review the literature in the field in part I of this thesis, where I provide evidence of the persistence of the Cartesian dualism in body studies while at the same time

identifying the valuable arguments advanced by the most influential perspectives. Here I scrutinise the three major turns occurring in social theory: the linguistic, the corporeal, and the affective turn. By doing so, I contend that despite the differences characterising each perspective, when addressing our embodied experiences, actions, and identities, often *either* one term of the mind-body dualism is privileged and/or set in opposition to the other, *or* the qualitative differences between these two experiential dimensions are erased and/or conflated. In this respect, I illustrate in what ways the persistence of the Cartesian paradigm in social theory appears to have left crucial relationships unexplained, such as those between internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, representational and non-representational forms of knowledge, and, indeed, mind and body.

In addition, I argue that, along with the just rejection of the transcendent, solipsistic, and self-contained Cartesian person, most approaches to the body appear to have unnecessarily disregarded the causal powers of the embodied agent's 'inner' life – that is, the phenomenological nuances according to which we get to know and act in the world, including material and immaterial experiential dimensions. This has resulted in an over-emphasis on the open-ended character and the external environments of embodiment at the expense of our lived experience and internal environments of embodiment, which are often reduced to irrelevant epiphenomena.

Finally, and importantly, besides highlighting the useful insights to retain and the pitfalls to avoid of each approach to the body, part I reveals a feature of embodiment which appears to be only implicitly acknowledged by extant perspectives. That is, by reviewing existent literature in the field, embodiment emerges as a phenomenon located at the encroachment between a pre-individual and individuated dimension, possessing therefore a paradoxical, chiasmic, and thus *dual* character: *both* a relational, open-ended, and processual phenomenon *and* a self-organising and differentiated system endowed with its own structure and properties. It is therefore by bringing to the fore this dual character that I intend to explore a post-Cartesian perspective of embodiment. However, before embarking on my exploration, I explain in what ways this endeavour is carried out in part II of this thesis.

Part II concerns the methodology employed by the present research – i.e., its rationale, aims, conceptual strategy, and methods. Here, on the ground of my initial analytical distinction between the ontological conclusions and epistemological truths related to the mind-body relationship, and of the dual character of embodiment emerging from the review of extant literature, I identify a conceptual strategy able to 'deal' with both these aspects in a non-dualist manner. This is a strategy long employed across Western and Eastern traditions, which consists of emplacing, grounding, or *enveloping dualism(s)* – including that between mind and body – in a wider non-dualist context and turning them into *dualities* in unity. In this way, opposed to forms of dualism(s) or 'flat' and one-dimensional views of embodiment encountered in existent perspectives, this approach involves a type of monism able to account for the plurality involved in our lived experience.

Furthermore, to aid my exploration of post-Cartesian territories, I identify two self-cultivation practices which I use as a case study. One is constituted by the Daoist Internal Arts (DIA) of neigong, qigong, and tai chi chuan; and the other is Baruch Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP). I employ the latter as a theoretical lens to examine the former, which I use as an ethnographic empirical arena. Both practices acknowledge that the dual character of embodiment is reflected at the phenomenological level, where we can shift between two main ways of getting to know and acting in the world – two modes of embodiment which I name the *Being* and the *Becoming*.

Here I explain that when the Being predominates, one tends to experience the world according to a binary, either/or, and linear logic, as a structure made up by individuated and distinct entities, like mind and body – this is a dichotomous mode of embodiment where dualism(s) are phenomenologically significant. When, instead, the Becoming mode becomes salient, one experiences the world according to a paradoxical, non-linear, and circular logic, as an ever-changing, unfinished, open-ended process, where mind and body, subject and object, internal and external, you and I, are not separate entities – this is a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment where dualities in unity are significant. Aiming at tapping into the tacit knowledge of the body, bringing about a radical shift from the dichotomous Being to the non-dichotomous Becoming, and

thus actually experiencing dualism(s) as dualities in unity, both DIA and SPP adopt the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context.

It is on this ground that I set my aim to contribute towards an approach to theorising and researching embodiment which can:

1. Transcend extant linguistic, corporeal, and affective approaches in body studies.

2. Engage with the analytical distinction related to the different experiential dimensions of embodiment – e.g., mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, representational and non-representational forms of knowledge – without conflating or setting these in opposition.

3. Advance our understanding of how the relationships between these different experiential dimensions come to be and change.

4. Retain a fundamentally process-oriented, open-ended, and relational framework, while accounting for the causal powers of our phenomenological life and individuated dimension.

To achieve these aims, within the DIA empirical arena, I investigate the strategies practitioners employ, the struggles they engage with, and the problems they encounter, in shifting from dichotomous to non-dichotomous modes of embodiment. To do so, I ask:

1. How do DIA practitioners talk about their minds, their bodies, and inner and outer dimensions?

2. What are the discursive, corporeal, and affective resources they draw on in their endeavour?

3. What are the roles of conscious deliberations and tacit knowledge of the body in DIA embodied practices?

4. How are the symbolic dimension and verbal communication employed to stimulate particular embodied experiences and embodied outcomes in DIA practices?

In support of my empirical investigation I utilise an ethnographic approach involving a set of methods suited to address the phenomenological varieties characterising human embodiment – these are: participant observation, auto-phenomenology, in-depth semi-structured interviews, drawing as research method, and multimodal discourse analysis.

Having set my aims according to an appropriate rationale, chosen a strategy to achieve these aims in consideration of Daoist and Spinozian insights, and equipped myself with an array of suited methods, I set off for my exploration in part III of this thesis.

In addressing the present research's aims and questions, in part III I show in what ways DIA and SPP i) distinguish between the experiential dimensions of embodiment and their reification as substances belonging to separate worlds, ii) engage with the dual character of embodiment, and iii) employ the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context. I do so by analysing the two modes of embodiment of the Being and the Becoming, as well as the four exemplary phenomenological relationships between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and representational and non-representational forms of knowledge.

Here I illustrate that, in both DIA and SPP, these relationships are regulated by a principle of *dynamic correspondence* according to which what occurs on one term is paralleled on the other. This principle of correspondence is dynamic in the sense that, while at the ontological level it does not entail that the two terms of a relationship are separate, at the epistemological level the relationship itself is not fixed, but, rather, amenable to change. That is, the two terms/experiential dimensions constituting a relationship can be experienced by the embodied agent as distinct or united – i.e., as dualism(s) or dualities in unity, according to respectively dichotomous and non-dichotomous modes of embodiment.

In this respect, to achieve a shift from the Being to the Becoming and turn dualism(s) into dualities, both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza subscribe to this principle of dynamic correspondence and actively engage with these phenomenological relationships (i.e., those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and representational and non-representational forms of knowledge), *attune* their terms at the phenomenological level, and actually experience their ontological unity. In this way, in both self-cultivation practices, the linear/binary logic of the dichotomous Being is instrumentally employed to access the paradoxical/circular logic of the non-dichotomous Becoming.

It is therefore on this ground that both DIA and SPP grant an ontological primacy to the mode of the Becoming, which thus envelops the fictive yet functional mode of the Being. And it is by employing the conceptual strategy of enveloping dualism(s) that both DIA and SPP operate within a theoretical framework which is able to account for an individuated dimension possessing its own phenomenal world, causal powers, and emergent properties within a non-dualist, relational, and process-oriented ontology – i.e., a theoretical framework which is epistemologically pluralist yet ontologically monist.

I develop these arguments by dedicating a chapter to each of the above relationships, which I first discuss within the DIA empirical arena and then re-read through the SPP's theoretical lens. This type of outline makes particularly visible the ongoing dialogue between the empirical and the theoretical constituting this thesis, while also resembling the circular logic underpinning DIA training, where immediate engagement and conscious deliberations continuously inform each other. Nevertheless, to engage with contemporary issues in body studies, towards the end of the case study the theoretical component acquires a more prominent role with a discussion of notions such as *processes of individuation*, *agency*, and *degrees*.

Re-conceptualised as a phenomenon which can shift between different modes, each endowed with different degrees of emergent properties and agentic powers, here I advance a view of embodiment

as a dynamic process of individuation whereby an immanent dimension self-actualises by bringing about novelty in the world. Additionally, I propose to conceive of agency as a matter of attunement between external and internal environments of embodiment, or, indeed, of shifting from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment. Moreover, I suggest that the notion of degrees can function as an efficacious antidote to dualist theorising, particularly apt to theorise dynamic relationships. In this respect, following both the Daoist tradition and Spinoza's theorising, the shift from the Being to the Becoming is also conceived of as an ongoing process which can be enacted according to different degrees, each possessing its own emergent properties and agentic powers.

All in all, I offer a contribution to a post-Cartesian perspective on embodiment which is faithful to a process-oriented ontology while also being able to account for the causal powers of our phenomenological world and individuated dimension. However, as my contribution remains on a theoretical level, in the epilogue of this thesis I discuss a recent publication on youth leisure practice to provide a snapshot of the possible ways the approach suggested by the present research can help analyse a concrete contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon.

Prologue: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIND AND BODY – ONTOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL TRUTHS

After his in-depth phenomenological investigation into our lived experience, René Descartes (2000/1998) concluded that the world is made up of two distinct 'substances' – one material, the other immaterial. The French philosopher arrived at this conclusion by reifying two dimensions according to which we experience the world. The physical realm, which we experience as having a spatial extension, was reified as one of the two substances: Extension – the 'res extensa'. The mental realm of the soul, which cannot be localized in the three-dimensional space, became the other substance: Thought – the 'res cogitans'. According to Descartes, in contrast with physical phenomena, the mental realm could not be explained by, and was thus able to free itself from, the deterministic laws of natural science. As the only living beings endowed with soul, humans would therefore be able to transcend the physical natural world.

By attributing to two dimensions of our phenomenological life the status of two distinct substances, the French philosopher created a dramatic, neat, and irreconcilable divide between mind and body – the mind was placed outside the body, outside nature, and indeed outside of the world; and the body was reduced to a mere object. Yet, while fully acknowledging Descartes' errors at the ontological level, the present research contends that it would be equally mistaken to reject his acknowledgment of what appear to be self-evident epistemological qualities of our lived experience. That is, the current study makes a distinction *between* the ontological conclusions of Descartes *and* the epistemological truths related to the relationship between mind and body. As it allows us to endorse an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist theoretical framework, this is a crucial distinction which needs to be clarified further.

Although many would acknowledge that various aspects of our experiences – e.g., what philosophers call qualia: colours, tastes, smells, etc. – have properties which are qualitatively different from those of physical phenomena, the Cartesian mind-body perspective has been

subjected to numerous critiques. Such sharp divide between the mind and the body, the subject and the world, and the subsequent problematic interaction between the two terms of these relationships, are often identified as the main problems with Descartes' arguments. If, as is apparent to everybody, the body affects the mind and vice versa, what is the point of contact between a material and an immaterial domain? What is the nature of the relationship between these two dimensions? We are therefore faced with the problem of a transcendent mind which is inexplicably able to interact with the physical world and vice versa.

Leaving aside for a moment the peculiar and untenable Cartesian worldview, the relationship between the world we experience, our body, and us as embodied agents, has long been debated across both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. This enigmatic relationship is still salient in a number of fields of contemporary applied research (e.g., artificial intelligence, robotics, medicine, psychology) which struggle to understand how an objective and material world is related to subjective and immaterial phenomena. While the challenging task of a cross-cultural genealogy of the mind-body relationship is far beyond the scope of the present research, a few observations can be made in order to begin to clarify the subtle yet crucial distinction underpinning this thesis' arguments – the distinction between the ontological conclusions of Descartes and the epistemological truths related to the relationship between mind and body.

Philosopher Jonathan Shear (2000), for instance, makes a persuading argument for the universality of the division between material and immaterial worlds, and argues that what is culturally diverse is the modality with which we experience such worlds (e.g., in our culture we see dreams or other mental phenomena as less 'real'). And certainly, the Buddhist tradition has dealt with the mind-body relationship for more than 2,000 years (Varela et al. 1993/1991). Even before that, Indian philosophers were debating issues related to the relationship between an immaterial consciousness and material phenomena in a vein not too dissimilar from contemporary philosophers of mind and cognitive scientists (Ganeri, 2012). Likewise, the same arguments are certainly valid for the thousands-of-years-old Daoist tradition, whose practices constitute the empirical arena of the current research's case study.

Indeed, although the Cartesian contentions are firmly rejected, within a number of domains of contemporary research the relationship between mind and body is a source of heated debate. As noted by philosopher Colin McGinn (1997/1989: 532):

> [A]s traditional theologians found themselves conceding cognitive closure with respect to certain of the properties of God, so we should look seriously at the idea that the mind-body problem brings us bang against the limits of our capacity to understand the world.

In a similar vein psychologist Saulo de Freitas Araujo (2012: 8) observes that "we find that after 40 years of neurophysiological research, we still do not have the least idea of how to solve the most basic problems about human consciousness".

In light of the above observations, it is not surprising that – as noted by science and technology studies scholar Lucy Suchman (2008: 147) – the struggle involved in the creation of embodied and embedded artificial agents has lead AI researchers to "resort to some kind of yet to be determined 'new stuff' as the missing ingredient for human-like machines". In all these fields, in other words, the acknowledgment that Descartes was mistaken in his conclusions has certainly not made redundant the issues concerning the relationship between mind and body. As argued by philosopher Yasuo Yuasa (1987: 18), "the mind body issue is not simply a theoretical speculation but it is originally a practical, lived experience [...]. The theoretical is only a reflection on this lived experience".

Philosopher Joseph Levine (1983) makes these issues especially salient with what he famously dubbed the 'explanatory gap': the conceptual divide between a physicalist account of the brain states and our actual lived experience. For instance, I invite the reader to imagine she is looking at a vivid red flower and is experiencing its redness. We know that the conscious experience of vivid red does arise *when* electromagnetic waveforms impinge on one's retina and are discriminated and categorized by a visual system. However, what we do not know is *exactly how* from this physical/material/objective system one's lived experience of vivid red – i.e., a mental/immaterial/subjective phenomenon – arises. There is therefore an explanatory gap which

leaves the Cartesian problematic of the mind-body interaction untouched: we have a material and objective realm (the brain) which appears to cause an immaterial and subjective phenomenon (one's lived experience).

By asking *why* our lived experience arises in the first place, such an explanatory gap is stressed even further by philosopher David Chalmers. If, Chalmers (1996) asks, our behaviour is merely the outcome of complex neural activity, in turn, produced through the input/output interaction between our embodied brain and the world, why do we need to be conscious in the first place? Calling this problem the 'hard problem' of consciousness studies, Chalmers (ibid.) employs the fictional character of a zombie to emphasize the gap between functions and experience. Chalmers' zombie is like any other human being except for the fact that it lacks lived experience. The physical structure of the zombie is *identical* to that of a human being and it behaves *exactly* as one of us; yet, it is 'empty inside' – it is not conscious.

Although counterintuitive, Chalmers' argument highlights the fact that in merely physicalist terms, a structure identical to that of a human being (i.e., possessing a brain and a body, and embedded in the environment with which it interacts) does not need to be conscious at all in order to function as any other conscious embodied agent. To reiterate, if our behaviour is simply the outcome of the complexity of our neural patterns and the interaction of our sensory-motor system with the surrounding environment, why would we need to be conscious? What is the function of our lived experience? And once more, what is the nature of the relationship between our lived experience and physical processes?

I am highlighting such unanswered questions as these appear to be bypassed, ignored or deliberately disregarded in too many contemporary perspectives of body studies. For instance, if our actions are the mere outcome of the material, social and cultural environments in which we are embedded, why do we need to be conscious at all? Is there no two-way causal relation between what we sense, feel, think and our course of action? Is our lived experience a mere epiphenomenon? I believe that these are important questions which, while occupying a central

place in research conducted in other fields, appear only to be particularly salient in sub-sociological fields such as medical sociology (Bendelow, 2010).

In fact, to provide a contribution towards further developments of the sociological advances made by body studies, the present research intends to make these problematics more visible in social theory. Although conceived of and interpreted in *very* different terms, it does seem that the mind-body relationship persists in its relevance, and this state of affairs is not only down to Plato or Descartes, even though both philosophers may be held responsible for having heavily influenced *our* – historically, geographically, and culturally located – conceptualisation and experience of this relationship.

To be sure, the way we live out our embodied condition and experience the relationship between our mind and body has been radically changing throughout history and across cultures. To remain in the Western world and in the modern era, after the Renaissance the body came to be seen as an object of mind, a mechanism which could be viewed with a certain detachment. With the Enlightenment, we also began to conceive of ourselves as at the centre of the networks of our relationship with nature and view the world as something separated from ourselves, 'out there' – objectified, represented, and ready to be mastered (Heidegger, 1977, in Burkitt, 1999: 56). Indeed, Descartes' theorising emerged precisely from this climate (Burkitt, 1999).

Nevertheless, it is important to make a distinction *between* the contingent character of our embodied experiences and the peculiar ways the relationship between mind and body can be experienced and lived out *and* fundamental structures of human embodiment constituting the foundations of social and cultural domains. As compellingly argued by philosopher Drew Leder (1990: 3) in his phenomenological account of 'immaterial' experiential dimensions, "experience plays a crucial role in encouraging and supporting Cartesian dualism".

According to Leder (ibid.) immaterial and material experiential dimensions are aspects of humans' embodied character rather than the result of a Cartesian influence. Rather, what instead can be linked to the Cartesian paradigm is the reification of these experiential dimensions. In relation to

the mind, for example, Leder (ibid.: 115) argues that "[a]n experiential disappearance is read in ontological terms", and therefore, as it cannot be represented in the same way the objectified body can, our mind, subjectivity, and lived experience are thought of as an 'other' substance – as belonging to a transcendent world.

Leder is, once again, making the distinction between the epistemological character of our immaterial experiences and the reification of these experiences as a distinct substance at the ontological level. He stresses the fact that, in line with a Cartesian paradigm, such immateriality is conceived of as outside our world, rather than one of the many dimensions through which we live out our embodied condition. By referring to the notion of the lived body, Leder (ibid.: 8) states:

> In Cartesianism, the human mind is viewed as an island of awareness afloat in a vast sea of insensate matter. The notion of the lived body makes room for a more inclusive sense of spirit – one immanent throughout the physical world and expressing itself at all levels of nature, as in a Whiteheadian or animistic ontology.

While the lived body, the immanence of mind in the physical world, and the Whiteheadian ontology will be discussed later, what is relevant to the current argument is that, as Leder (ibid.: 3) rightly suggests, to tackle the persistence of the Cartesian paradigm we need to acknowledge rather than negate "its experiential truths".

In other words, it might be helpful to separate the Cartesian and cognitivist split between the knower and the known from the mind-body relationship which provides the basis for our lived experience (Stenner, 2008). With respect to theorising and researching embodiment, to borrow the language of Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow (1998: 2, original emphasis), a "useful distinction can be made here between dual*ity* and dual*ism*". That is, a distinction *between* the usefulness of analytical categories such as mind and body (which are, inevitably, always implicitly employed) at the epistemological level *and* their reification as self-contained entities at the ontological level. This is also a matter of not conflating analytical categories and addressing the complexities involved in the ways we experience and act in the world (Archer, 2000). Put another

way, this distinction can help us stick to monism at the ontological level while accounting for pluralism at the epistemological level.

In experiential terms, human embodiment is an immensely rich and complex phenomenon. The world we experience consists of what we touch, hear, see, smell, and taste. The way we experience our body includes interoceptive sensations, such as kinaesthesis (the ability to feel movements of the limbs and body), bodily pleasure and pain, temperature, internal damage, the need for sustenance and rest, etc. Moreover, our experiences involve reflections, thoughts, memories, images, and inner verbal conversations. In fact, many of our experiences consist of peculiar combinations of these aspects, continuously shifting along a virtually infinite range of qualitatively different experiential dimensions. Yet, without reifying them as separate worlds, setting them in opposition, or conflating the nuances involved, the basic qualitative difference between material and immaterial experiences can be employed as a helpful analytical starting point to orientate ourselves in such wide range of phenomenological variations.

Phenomenologically, we are all familiar with these variations: while many of our experiences can be located in three-dimensional space, other kinds of experiences have a more immaterial connotation. Examples of the former are my experience of the chair, the desk, the keyboard, and the computer screen in front of me now, or the flower I can spot in my neighbour's garden from my window. Examples of the latter can be the desire to eat a particular dish, a mental image of an installation I saw in an exhibition, or the inner conversations with which I am evaluating the lines I have just written. Nevertheless, the different qualities involved in these experiences do not need to create sharp divides in the qualities characterizing our phenomenological world.

In fact, these qualities could be divided into an unlimited range of shades, dimensions, and categories more or less functional to one's analytical purposes. For instance, a cramp in my calf, a feeling of lightness in one of my joints, or a gurgle in my stomach, cannot be located in the physical space with the same precision as a flower in my neighbour's garden – here we have different degrees of material experiences. Similarly, the mixture of feelings of a doctoral student

before an important presentation cuts across material and immaterial connotations as the more physical features, such as the increased heartbeat, the upward flow of heat, or the narrowing of the visual field, are experienced alongside too-subtle sensations that are difficult to pin down in a three-dimensional space or be represented at the discursive level.

Hence, embodiment is far from being a 'flat' or one-dimensional phenomenon, but rather it is a phenomenon enacted and experienced on the basis of different experiential dimensions – it is a multidimensional phenomenon (Burkitt, 1999; Shilling, 2005). And I argue that all its dimensions need to be accounted for as having causal currency, even those we tend to perceive as immaterial – i.e., are consciousness, subjectivity, mind, conscious deliberations, affective states, and sensations less 'actual' than matter? Less relevant when it comes to bringing about change in the world? In this respect, I very much welcome the numerous calls of those contemporary social and cultural theorists who urge us to re-think materiality as something more than matter (e.g., Ansell-Pearson, 2017; Blackman, 2012; Coole & Frost, 2010; Grosz, 2011, 2017). And I share philosopher Elizabeth Grosz's (2011: 18) doubt when she notes that "perhaps materialism is no longer an adequate term and we need to generate a new term".

Overall, what I am pointing out here is that which we still do not know about our embodied condition, what Chris Shilling (2012/1993: xi) calls "the emergent properties of the embodied subject". We know that our bodies are much more than the mere sum of biological and social processes, yet, as we do not know how these processes are exactly related, we remain oblivious to the body itself. The questions asked more than two decades ago by Grosz (1994: 189) – "What, ontologically speaking, is the body? What is its 'stuff', its matter? What of its form? Is that given or produced?" – remain troubling concerns in body studies.

Once more, it may be helpful to discern between dualism(s) and dualities. Indeed, the paradoxical and *dual* character of the lived body – both subject and object, structure and process, differentiated and open-ended, material and immaterial, and "'one yet many' [and] 'more than one and less than many'" – has long been acknowledged yet it is still theoretically undeveloped (Blackman, 2012:

16). To be sure, rather than answering what are perhaps 'impossible' questions, this research intends to provide a contribution which can help with effectively engaging with the above issues within body studies.

To sum up, I have argued that the mind-body relationship and the qualitative differences according to which we get to know and act in the world are not a Cartesian construction. Although the influence of Descartes' ontological conclusion still shapes our Western and contemporary way of thinking of and living out the mind-body relationship, I have contended that this relationship nevertheless relates to fundamental features of human embodiment. On this ground, I have suggested distinguishing *between* the Cartesian disembodied subject and the view of mind and body as two separate substances *and* the multidimensionality and richness of our phenomenological life, encompassing both material and immaterial experiences. In other words, by rejecting Descartes' ontological claims while retaining the epistemological truths inherent in the relationship between mind and body, I have proposed the adoption of an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist theoretical framework. I have furthermore advocated engagement with the Cartesian paradigm in a more direct manner, and questioned the view of our lived experience as a mere epiphenomenon.

Having introduced the relationship between mind and body in more general terms, in what follows I wish to show in what ways this relationship has been approached in social theory. By reviewing extant literature in the field, I will argue that the just anti-Cartesian stance underpinning sociological studies of the body has nevertheless produced the unwanted 'side effects' of i) an over-emphasis on the open-ended and relational character of embodiment and ii) the neglect of the embodied agent's phenomenological life and its causal powers – two intertwined outcomes which are identified by this thesis as impediments to a truly non-dualist social theory. In this respect, I will contend that Descartes' framework not only appears to permeate everyday discourse and common sense, but it is also imbued in the very academic theorising aiming at overcoming it, inevitably shaping the way we conceptualise the body and the very notion employed to address the

Cartesian paradigm – that of *embodiment*, which appears to still leave mind and body either set in opposition or conflated.

Part I: LITERATURE REVIEW – THE DUAL CHARACTER OF EMBODIMENT

Introduction – Mind and Body in Social Theory

Seen more as a philosophical rather than sociological preoccupation, the mind-body relationship has never been a major concern in the discipline. Nevertheless, the Cartesian paradigm did influence the discipline's interest in the mind, as pioneers of the discipline aimed at establishing a field of enquiry separate from the natural sciences, which were concerned with the physical world (Shilling, 2012/1993). Within this context, the socially uninteresting 'fleshly' body fell outside the sociological domain, and fathers of the discipline like Émile Durkheim believed that focusing on the social sphere was the only possible way to produce meaningful explanations of human behaviours (ibid.).

For Durkheim (1982: 52, original emphasis) this meant concentrating research on 'social facts':

> [Social facts] consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him. Consequently, since they consist of representations and actions, they cannot be confused with organic phenomena, nor with psychical phenomena, which have no existence save in and through the individual consciousness. Thus they constitute a new species and to them must be exclusively assigned the term *social*.

Thus, unwittingly mirroring Descartes' mind/body split, from its outset, the discipline's concerns shifted towards the disembodied realm of the symbolic, the representational, and the mind. Moreover, Durkheim's quotation reveals that from the very beginning the focus was exclusively narrowed on an 'external' dimension in opposition to the inner 'psychical phenomena' and 'individual consciousness', which were neglected alongside 'organic phenomena'.

Yet, the body did not disappear completely. As Shilling (2012/1993: 21) argues, the body has always been an "absent presence" – i.e., even when the focus was not directly on the corporeal,

sensual, and lived features of the body, human physicality was nevertheless implicitly present in sociological investigations. Actions, affective states, language – all aspects inextricably linked to our embodied condition – inevitably needed to be taken into account by the founding fathers of the discipline interested in social mobility, health, morbidity, mortality rates, as well as in embodied 'social categories' such as 'race', sex, and social class (ibid.).

However, if with its focus on the mind, sociology has traditionally showed a tendency to generate disembodied accounts of social phenomena, this trend began to change during the 1980s, when the body became an explicit focus of analysis in social theory and a sociology of the body started to emerge. Perhaps unsurprisingly, an explicit interest in the body was concomitant with an explicit concern with the mind-body dualism (Crossley, 2007), which became a target of a series of attacks within the social sciences. In fact, in the following four chapters, by scrutinising extant literature in the field, I intend to elucidate in what ways this anti-Cartesian stance has developed in social theory.

I begin in chapter 1 by explaining that alongside the rejection of the Cartesian person, there has been an unnecessary and unproductive over-emphasis on external environments of embodiment at the expenses of the individuated dimension of the embodied agent and her phenomenological world. Here I furthermore argue that the Cartesian paradigm still appears to be subtly pervading extant conceptualisations of the notion precisely advanced to bridge the mind-body gap left by Descartes – i.e., the notion of embodiment. I subsequently discuss in chronological order the three major turns occurring in body studies since its inception: the linguistic, the corporeal, and the affective turn – in chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively. When scrutinising these extant approaches, my critique is sympathetic. That is, I consider theorists able to offer valuable insights when it comes to theorising and researching the body, while, at the same time, showing that their arguments, if employed on their own, can only result in reductionist accounts of the phenomenon of embodiment.

In chapter 2 I show that the linguistic turn is concerned with the body as a system of meaning, a cultural product – i.e., the representational/objectified body. Here I draw on the arguments of philosophers Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to demonstrate that this perspective has the merit of having emphasised the causal powers of the immaterial dimensions of mind, the symbolic, and language. However, while theorists of the linguistic turn have pointed out that embodiment is also a discursive phenomenon, I illustrate that they do not appear to have explained in what ways language and corporeality are implicated, leaving, therefore, a gap between the two terms, and mind and body still set in opposition.

To compensate for this lacuna, in chapter 3 I show that the corporeal turn attempted to integrate the insights of the linguistic turn with the lived, sensual, and performative aspects of embodiment. A number of theorists within this turn offer valid help to support this thesis' endeavour. In this respect, I employ the arguments of cultural anthropologist Thomas Csordas, who urges us to spell out in more detail the relationship between the semiotic and phenomenological dimensions of embodiment, and suggests that language, rather than only detaching us from it, can also provide access to our corporeal dimension. I furthermore draw on the theorising of philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, who stresses the danger of explaining away the mind-body dualism, and advocates novel conceptual devices to account for the paradoxical nature of embodiment, which possesses both a processual nature and structural aspects.

Following these two theorists, I momentarily suspend my chronological outline of body studies to introduce the thought of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Not only does the French phenomenologist inform the arguments of Grosz, Csordas, and many other authors involved in the corporeal turn, he also envisages a view of the body which, more than others, informs this thesis' re-conceptualisation of embodiment. In fact, for Merleau-Ponty, embodiment is a chiasmic and processual phenomenon located at the encroachment between a pre-individual and individuated dimension, thus possessing a dual character. In addition, discussing Merleau-Ponty's arguments allows an in-depth qualification of the phenomenological approach endorsed by the current

research, which aims at addressing that in-between space both separating and unifying these pre-individual and individuated dimensions.

I conclude my review of the corporeal turn by noting that, despite the promising premise, the aim of bringing mind and body together has never been fully achieved by this perspective. Instead, what acquired currency in sociology during the 1990s were material-semiotics theories of embodiment like actor-network theory (ANT), which, rather than meaningfully accounting for all the dimensions of embodiment, seem to be prone to an analysis of social phenomena which is ultimately flat, lifeless, and merely descriptive. Here the dimensions targeted – the material and the semiotic, and mind and body – are conflated and therefore become elusive, as what remains are only abstract links, connections, and entanglements.

Following the corporeal turn, in chapter 4 I outline the features of the affective turn by mainly referring to the arguments of social theorist/philosopher Brian Massumi, who epitomises both the valuable insights to retain and the pitfalls to avoid of this latest turn in social theory. I explain that the turn to affect has the merit of consolidating the process-oriented ontology endorsed by the present study, conceptualising matter as alive and endowed with an experiential aspect, and theorising the body as possessing its own properties and agentic powers.

I furthermore compare Massumi's theorising with that of Merleau-Ponty's, and outline their similar conceptualisation of embodiment as a phenomenon caught between a pre-individual and individuated dimension, as well as their shared interest in tapping into the transformative space between these two dimensions. Here I illustrate how the notion of affect appears to possess the potential to productively engage with the dual character of embodiment – i.e., with *both* its processual nature and non-linear logic *and* its structural aspect and either/or logic.

I then move on to the problems often encountered when turning to affect, and show that affect theorists like Massumi seem to stress only the autonomous character of affect, and the dissonance occurring between mind and body, rather than also considering the possibility of an attunement between these two dimensions of embodiment. That is, I illustrate how in contemporary theorising,

affect tends to be conceived of as a force only operating at a nonconscious level – i.e., as something which makes us move and has an influence on us, but upon which we are unable to act. In this way, I show that despite the just stress on vital, visceral, and sensuous aspects of the body, rather than developing the calls of the corporeal turn, a number of theorists involved in the affective turn fell instead into an inverse Cartesian dualism, where the body and its materiality, rather than the mind and its immateriality, becomes the privileged term of the relationship.

Finally, I summarise my literature review by arguing that the notion of embodiment has not fulfilled its promise of overcoming the Cartesian paradigm. That is, when theorising our embodied experience, action, and identity, often *either* one of the terms of the mind-body dualism is privileged at the expense of the other, setting mind and body in opposition, *or* the qualitative differences between the ways we get to know and act in the world are erased and/or conflated, producing sterile forms of monism. In other words, rather than having gone away, it seems that the Cartesian dualism is too often explained away when theorising and researching embodiment.

More importantly, however, I contend that the analysis of extant approaches has drawn attention to an aspect of embodiment which is only implicitly acknowledged by contemporary perspectives. That is, embodiment emerges as a phenomenon caught between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, as being both many and one, open-ended and differentiated, a process and a structure – i.e., embodiment appears to be a phenomenon possessing a dual character. It is in fact this aspect that this thesis has chosen to explore further in order to address the impasse currently vexing body studies. While following a dual path to transcend a dualistic approach might seem an idiosyncrasy, I suggest that it is precisely in this way that we can move from a mere anti-Cartesian stance to a truly post-Cartesian theorising of embodiment. And it is precisely with this anti-Cartesian stance, which I intend to move away from, that I begin my review of extant literature of body studies below.

Chapter 1: THE ANTI-CARTESIAN PROJECT AND THE NOTION OF EMBODIMENT

1.1 The Anti-Cartesian Project – The Over-Emphasis on External Environments and the Neglect of Our Phenomenological World

An exemplary text underpinned by an anti-Cartesian stance is *Changing the Subject*, published in 1984 by social psychologists Julian Henriques, Wendy Holloway, Cathy Urwin, Couze Venn, and Valerie Walkerdine. While critiques of the Cartesian paradigm abounded much earlier than this publication, arguments like those advanced by Henriques and his colleagues acquired currency in body studies and still appear to strongly resonate in contemporary theorising of the body after more than three decades.

Inherent in Henriques and colleagues' arguments are two major intertwined outcomes, which are identified in the present research as obstacles to further developments when theorising and researching embodiment. Resembling Durkheim, these are i) an exclusive focus on an external and open-ended dimension, and ii) the dismissal of the subject's phenomenological world. In fact, these two consequences are difficult to pull apart: once the attention is directed to external environments, the inner life of the subject can only disappear. But in what way were these outcomes associated with an anti-Cartesian standpoint?

Mainly drawing on psychoanalytic and post-structuralist theories, in contrast with the unitary, consistent, and rational Cartesian person, Henriques and colleagues (1998/1984) conceptualised the subject as exclusively dynamic, fluid, and fragmented, always positioned in relation to a particular social and cultural milieu. Such emphasis on the open-ended character of the embodied agent entailed the abandonment of analytical distinctions such as those between the individual and society, inner and outer dimensions, and, indeed, mind and body – suspiciously seen as a heritage of the Cartesian perspective. However, by not accounting for the fact that embodied agents not only continuously change but are also able to hold coherently together, rather than 'changing', reduced to society and culture, here the subject, along her phenomenological life, risks

disappearing altogether. Bearing this peril in mind, where is the present study located in relation to this anti-Cartesian stance?

Answering the above question can help to explicate a number of subtle distinctions made by the current research. To begin with, this thesis certainly subscribes to the rejection of the self-contained Cartesian person (as, indeed, the great majority of contemporary theorists would do). The unitary self is a concept undeniably difficult to sustain. Our self appears to be at the centre of the world we experience. It feels like an inner agent who makes decisions, carries out actions, and acts upon the world; it appears to be a source of opinions, fears, hopes, and desires. However, to employ the words of cognitive scientist/biologist Francisco Varela, philosopher Evan Thompson, and psychologist Eleanor Rosch (1993/1991: 59), "all of the reflective traditions of human history – philosophy, science, psychoanalysis, religion, meditation – have challenged the naïve sense of self. No tradition has ever claimed to discover an independent, fixed, or unitary self within the world of experience".

A similar argument could be made for cognitivist internal processes. Indeed, it is not clear where these internal processes would take place, unless we want to imagine what the philosopher Daniel Dennett names Cartesian Theatre. With the metaphor of the Cartesian Theatre, Dennett (1993/1991) intends to challenge the persistent belief that there is an unspecified location in the brain (or anywhere else, for that matter) where the subject *is*, the content of consciousness comes and goes, and our lived experience 'happens'. This place is provokingly imagined by Dennett (ibid.) as a stage in one's head where a little homunculus receives images and other sensory stimulations through a screen and acts on these by means of an instrument panel. Imagining such a place is an absurdity, as philosopher William James (1890, in Blackmore, 2010/2003: 57) was already noting when asserting that there is no place in our body where our lived experience can be found: "no cell or group of cells in the brain of such anatomical or functional pre-eminence as to appear to be the keystone or centre of gravity of the whole system".

Indeed, contemporary cognitive sciences are increasingly moving towards a view of our lived experience which is not conceptualised as something occurring in our brain but, rather, as a phenomenon extending beyond our body into the surrounding material, social, and cultural environments (e.g., Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Thompson, 2007; Varela et al., 1993/1991). But, most importantly, the Cartesian person of classical cognitive science and experimental psychology – a unified, consistent and rational cognising subject of an external world internally represented in her mind – would reproduce the inexplicable mind-body gap, the problem of a transcendent immaterial mind, knower of a material world set apart from it. Instead, this study is in favour of an embodied agent who, by means of her body, is directly involved in bringing about a world, rather than being separate from it. That said, it is my initial distinction between ontological conclusions and epistemological truths which draws a line between this thesis' and Henriques and his colleagues' arguments.

For example, it is one thing to recognise the problems related to the Cartesian paradigm, but another to ignore or explain away the fact that our experiential world includes both mental and physical dimensions. It is one thing to realise the elusive character of our sense of self, but another to pretend that the experience of an 'experiencer' at the centre of everything we are aware of, with an exclusively personal character inaccessible to other people, does not exist. It is one thing to move away from the sterile notion of internal processes, but another to reduce the phenomenology of inner feelings, conversations, and reflexive thoughts to irrelevant epiphenomena. It is one thing to pay the closest attention to social processes, practices, and language, but another to substitute the subject with the symbolic world, the speaker with the text, the doer with the doing, and thus to focus exclusively on an outer dimension.

In fact, Henriques and colleagues (1998/1984) did identify a number of unanswered questions present in their perspective. For instance, they wondered: if the subject is multiple rather than unitary, how does she hold together? What accounts for the continuity of individuals' actions, as they repeatedly position themselves within particular social and cultural contexts? If we focus on social processes without considering the subject, then how can we theorise agency, creativity,

change, and resistance? In acknowledging the inability of their framework to provide adequate answers to these questions, they were seeing their proposal as a point of departure to address issues of power/knowledge and social inequality more efficaciously. Therefore, they were aware that there were problems, but they thought that these could be solved by working *within* the proposed framework.

Yet, and significantly, in the foreword of the 1998 re-edition of their book (14 years after the first edition) they admit that "despite interesting new initiatives since *Changing the Subject* was published, some of the basic problems it raises, both epistemological and ontological, still are at issue" (Henriques et al., 1998/1984: xiv). In fact, their project to move on from the Cartesian perspective does not seem to have entirely succeeded so far, and, indeed, some of the authors of *Changing the Subject* moved away from the psychoanalytic, post-structuralist, and linguistic approaches initially informing their work, and became among the advocates of the turn to affect (e.g. Henriques, 2010; Venn, 2010). These 'knotty' problems, I contend, appear to still vex the notion advanced to address them – that of embodiment.

1.2 The Notion of Embodiment – Addressing Dualism(s)

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, the notion of *embodiment* emerged as a key concept for explaining our phenomenological world, actions, identities, and socio-cultural practices (Shilling, 2012/1993). Advanced to address the Cartesian mind-body divide, embodiment is conceived of as a concept elucidating the univocity of mind and body, accounting for material and immaterial experiences, and emphasising the intersection of our psychical interiority and corporeal exteriority (McNay, 1999). The notion is furthermore employed to avoid both deterministic and voluntaristic accounts, where our lived experience is theorised as determined either by the societal norms disciplining our body or by the conscious deliberations of a transcendent mind (ibid.). Overlapping with the notion of the *lived body* – the body which brings about a world for us, and is both subject and object – embodiment is also intended as an existential condition, which makes possible both culture and the self (Csordas, 1994; Leder, 1990; Shilling, 2012/1993).

Embodiment stresses relationality, contingency, and co-constitution (Blackman, 2012; Papadopoulos, 2011), and entails our experiences and actions as always situated, as emerging from a spatio-temporal and material-semiotic assemblage of human and non-human components through which the lived experience of the knower and the object of her knowledge are enacted (Haraway, 1991). Our phenomenological world is thus also embodied in the sense that it extends beyond the boundaries of our skin, as it is emplaced in social, cultural, and material environments. More than a 'thing', with clearly defined boundaries, embodiment is therefore seen as a dynamic process, whereby symbolic and material worlds are brought about (Blackman, 2012). Challenging dualism(s) such as subject-object, nature-culture, agency-structure, interiority-exteriority, symbolic-material, and, of course, mind-body, embodiment acquired the status of a notion which can, or indeed needs to, be theorised and researched in its own right (Shilling, 2012/1993).

All in all, embodiment promises to go beyond the Cartesian framework and account for the multidimensionality of our phenomenological world – but to what extent has the notion fulfilled its promises? Of course, as embodiment has been increasingly employed for socio-cultural analyses, the notion has been approached in a wide variety of ways, which cannot be included even in a much more ambitious endeavour than this thesis. At risk of oversimplifying, however, I contend that despite the differences between extant perspectives, the mind-body dualism – along with the problems we have seen left unaddressed in the anti-Cartesian project – has remained embedded in the very theorising advanced for overcoming it. As a consequence of this, there has been a tendency in body studies to either stress one polarity of the Cartesian dualism at the expense of the other, or to erase the qualitative differences between mind and body. In short, mind and body are either set in opposition or conflated, and therefore none of the notion's conceptualisations already proposed appears to be satisfactory alone.

I will develop my contentions by outlining the features of the three major turns in body studies: the linguistic turn, which appeared to explain the body with mind and language; the corporeal turn, which ended up conflating mind and body; and the affective turn, which seemed to reduce the mind to the body and matter. I will show that all these perspectives clearly endorse an anti-

Cartesian stance, but, paradoxically employ either a dualistic framework setting mind and body in opposition, or a flat and unproductive monism erasing the qualitative differences of immaterial and material experiential dimensions. In addition, none of these perspectives appears to be willing to consider the causal powers of the embodied agent's inner life and internal environments of embodiment, which consequently acquire an epiphenomenal status.

Chapter 2: THE LINGUISTIC TURN

2.1 The Power of Discourse

Committed to the anti-Cartesian project and drawing on post-structuralist perspectives, theorists of the linguistic turn in the social sciences concentrated their efforts on language and everyday talk. These theorists have the merit of recognising that language and the symbolic world are as actual as matter and the material world, and rather than a mere means of communication, they are instruments to 'do' things: to produce, reproduce, and/or transform the practices constitutive of society. Yet, despite its merits, by not being able to meaningfully theorise the relationship between immaterial and material dimensions of embodiment, and language and corporeality, the linguistic turn appeared to reproduce the very mind-body divide it intended to avoid. In fact, what emerged from this turn was a model of embodiment where everything is explained by resorting to the symbolic realm of the mind, which is, in turn, set in opposition to the materiality of the body. In this way, unwittingly following Descartes, here the mind plays the key role while 'the body' is inevitably objectified.

In addition, like the other approaches to the body which will follow, the linguistic perspective appears to neglect internal environments of embodiment and our phenomenological world. This appears evident when one considers the idiosyncrasy which vexes this perspective, which on the one hand emphasises language and on the other neglects reflexivity, a faculty which can only be employed within the symbolic domain. Foucault is exemplary in this respect. As he stated in several interviews (see Crossley, 1994: 123-134, 160-165, for a useful account), it is by unveiling the discursive structures of power that the subject can reflexively resist the regimes of truth constituted by means of language. That is, as inner conversations and reflections are articulated within a symbolic experiential dimension, the awareness of the ways the exercise of power works through the structure of language and discourse – at the level of mind – endows the embodied agent with a critical distance and the possibility of generating anti-authoritarian ideas.

Nevertheless, while both the subject and her reflexive faculties are implicitly the ultimate target, they are never explicitly considered in Foucault's actual works (again, one needs to resort to interviews to find Foucault discussing these). As noted by Nick Crossley (1994: 169), "Foucault's methodology consistently prioritises the rule over the rule follower, the practice over the practitioner and the statement over the statement-maker and, as such, it does not have the theoretical tools to address the reflexive agent that it identifies". Importantly, such a view appears to neglect not only the embodied agent's reflexive capacities but also the qualitative richness of her phenomenal life as a whole.

That is, not only reflexive capacities but also affective states, feelings, desires, pleasures, and pains are constituted and regulated in discourse (see, for instance, Edwards, 1997). Discourses are here meant to be historically and culturally located dynamic systems of statements, ideas, and practices which, through their implications, create fields of possibilities for people's 'doing' and 'being' (and 'not doing' and 'not being') (Foucault, 2002/1972; Butler, 1993). In this way, our entire phenomenological world is explained by recurring to only the one dimension of language. In this respect, both Foucault (2002/1970) and Butler (1988) blame phenomenology for assuming a pre-given subject and a pre-constituted human nature – a subject who has an existence which precedes discourses (see also Althusser, 2001/1971).

However, while the embodied agent is constituted and regulated in discourse, she does not in turn constitute discourse. In fact, the very notion of subjectivity is here charged with the double meaning of the French 'assujettissement' – both subjectivity and subjectification (Henriques et al., 1998/1984: 3). Yet, the Althusserian pseudo-subject – i.e., the 'I' who comes into existence through discourse and narrative, through being cited, named, interpellated; the subject who, temporally speaking, neither precedes nor succeeds discourse, but rather emerges within it – poses some serious problems, which, I would argue, are not less problematic than those posed by the 'Cartesian person'. Indeed, in order to be called and recognise herself within the symbolic domain, this subject, needs to be – physically speaking – already constituted. And, it is precisely this physicality which is not adequately accounted for in the linguistic turn.

Having said that, I wish now to develop the above arguments and outline in more detail the insights to retain and the pitfalls to avoid of the linguistic turn. To do so I will discuss first Foucault's and then Butler's theorising. The first theorist points out that the causal powers of the immaterial dimension of mind are not minor to those of the material dimension of the body, while the second emphasises the inextricable link between language and corporeality. Nevertheless, by privileging the first term of the relationships they are concerned with, both theorists ultimately set mind and body in opposition.

2.2 The Foucauldian Body – The Immaterial Dimension of Embodiment

A historian of ideas, throughout his work Foucault interrogates how, historically, our everyday intelligibility has taken form, how certain intellectual structures have become familiar to us, and how taken-for-granted frameworks of thought operate within strategies of oppressive power. Motivated to unveil the conditions, constraints, and possibilities of our thought, and the power strategies shaping what can, or cannot be, thought about, Foucault (1992/1985: 9) is interested in understanding:

> [T]o what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known. [...T]o what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently.

Thus, Foucault's preoccupations are located at the symbolic dimension of discourse – concerned with thought and the immaterial dimension of embodiment. He points out that the subjugation and objectification of the body is often accomplished through a type of knowledge which does not directly relate to bodies' biology, physiology, and materiality. Rather, the body can be subjugated and objectified through an elusive form of mastery, which is not possessed by particular institutions or individuals, and which can, nevertheless, intimately and pervasively permeate bodies' materiality.

In this respect, Foucault (1991/1977: 29-30, my emphasis) suggests that from the 18th century there was a gradual shift of the penal systems towards much more intangible yet effective and far-reaching technologies of disciplines:

> Rather than seeing this soul as the reactivated remnants of an ideology, one would see it as the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body. It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished – and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives […] This *real, non-corporeal soul* is not a substance, it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power […T]he soul is the prison of the body.

Hence, the technology of the immaterial mind/soul was employed to control, manipulate, and imprison the material body – in Foucault's (1991/1977: 17) words, "[t]he apparatus of punitive justice must now bite into this bodiless reality".

This, I believe, is the most valuable of Foucault's contentions: oppressive power can also work through the body's objectification and transposition on an abstract, discursive, and immaterial level. Here, rather than being two separate substances, the immaterial dimension of the symbolic realm resonates with the material dimension of the body's flesh – in other words, the immaterial mind is not less actual or possessing less causal power than the material body. It is in this way that Foucault's theorising can help us to bring together mind and body. Yet, unsatisfactory accounts and dualistic splits arise when Foucault's analyses are not integrated with the physical and phenomenological aspects of our embodied condition – the lacuna which the present study intends to address.

In fact, as Foucault (1998/1978: 151-152) seems to conceive the biological and the historical as intertwined, his ultimate goal appears to be consistent with the current research's concerns when he states that:

> [T]he purpose of the present study [i.e. *The History of Sexuality: 1*] is in fact to show how deployments of power are directly connected to the body – to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures; far from the body having to be effaced, what is needed is to make visible through an analysis in which the biological and the historical are not consecutive to one another, as in the evolutionism of first sociologists, but are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of modern technologies of power that take life as their objective. Hence I do not envisage a 'history of mentalities' that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a 'history of bodies' and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested.

However, despite his good intentions, Foucault exclusively concentrates his efforts on the socio-cultural structures of discourse – i.e., on the immaterial dimension of mind and external environments of embodiment. As a result, the Foucauldian body is exclusively an objectified, discursive, and represented body, rather than also being a sensing, lived, phenomenal body. According to Foucault (1991/1977: 25), in power relations and political struggles the body is always present – yet, this is a body which is shaped but does not shape, is passive but not active, is object but never subject:

> [I]t is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission […] The body is […] directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.

What appear to be neglected here are the internal environments of embodiment – i.e., the capacities and constraints of the body as a corporeal entity. However, these are neglected but not negated, in the sense that they are thought of as non-existent. For example, when discussing revolts in prisons, Foucault (1991/1977: 30) notes that, although involving a discursive realm, they were also revolts "against an entire state of physical misery […] against cold, suffocation, and overcrowding, against decrepit walls, hunger, physical maltreatment […] they were revolts, at the level of the body, against the very body of the prison". Similarly, when he discusses the discipline

involved in military training, Foucault (1991/1977: 155) observes that "[i]n the exercise that is imposed upon it and which it resists, the body brings out its essential correlations and spontaneously rejects the incompatible".

Nevertheless, these are rare instances in Foucault's works, and the body's physical generative capabilities and limitations are never addressed as such. The second (1992/1985) and third (1990/1986) volume of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* are exemplary in this respect. Throughout these volumes the body's capacities and constraints are merely analysed as discourses, as if the physicality of a body engaging in extreme alimentary or sexual practices (the examples discussed by Foucault) would be irrelevant. The same applies to the material environment in which a body is embedded. When Foucault (1990/1986: 99-132) discusses, for instance, Galen's medical system, it is as if the body's material properties, the rhythm of the changing seasons, and extreme cold or heat, were merely abstract discourses.

To be sure, even our feelings of hunger, sexual arousal, or perception of external temperature are always discursively mediated, and certainly our body cannot escape the marks of culture and history. However, there are some physical limits which exceed the semiotic and historical dimensions – above or below certain temperatures a human being cannot survive, independently of the discourses which are or are not available to her, or of the historical period in which she lives. Moreover, bodies' limits, constraints, and capacities do also shape society – they are not only shaped by it (Shilling, 2005). Yet, as noted by the Centre for Contemporary Studies Education Group (1981, in Henriques et al., 1998/1984: 108, original emphasis), "Foucault retains a place in theory for relations or forces that exist outside the discourses he describes, but in his histories these are rarely elaborated […] In such work we stay *inside* discourses".

It is up to us to integrate his insights with both the subject's embodied experiences and the body's physical properties – both of which possess causal powers. That is, we need to include the body which can be recalcitrant to cultural imperatives, subject, agent, and generator of our social life – a

body made of flesh and blood, organs and physiological system, which moves, senses, and makes the existence of our cultural world possible in the first place.

In addition, if we take as valid (as I intend to) Foucault's suggestion that the symbolic system has a powerful grip on the body's corporeality, then we need to meaningfully re-conceptualise the representational and discursive body in its intimate relationship with the sensuous, carnal, and pre-objective body – exactly how do particular discourses and discursive practices come to constitute our corporeal properties? And exactly how, in turn, do these properties and the structure of human embodiment shape discourse? Foucault provides only partial answers to the first of these two questions (Barad, 2007), and does not address the second at all (Shilling, 2012/1993).

Left unanswered, in turn, these questions leave a gap – indeed, a Cartesian gap: that between language and corporeality. It is therefore to this language-corporeality relationship which I will now turn by scrutinising how it has been dealt with by one of the most notable of Foucault's contemporary followers: Butler. Rather than developing Foucault's work to include the corporeal dimension of the body, Butler stubbornly remains on a discursive level of analysis, and despite her best intentions of avoiding the mind-body opposition and bridging the gap between language and corporeality, she reproduces an account of our embodied condition where everything is explained by discourse and the lived experience of the embodied agent is reduced to an irrelevant phenomenon.

2.3 The Discursive Body – Language that Matters

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, by questioning the ontological bases of sexual differences, what has been dubbed 'third wave feminism' aimed to go beyond the gap between the material body and the socio-cultural representations of it (Colebrook, 2004). The goal here was to transcend the mind-body dualism, the distinction between language and corporeality, and thus that between sex and gender. For Judith Butler (1990/1999: 50) – perhaps the theorist who has taken this standpoint to its most extreme consequences – the aim was to overthrow the paradigm "'sex'

is to nature 'the raw' as 'gender' is to culture 'the cooked'". For Butler it is the cultural category (or discourse) of gender which generates that of sex – i.e., it is not only gender that is socially and culturally prescribed, but sex as well.

Put simply, within this perspective, once we start talking, thinking, and theorising about the body, we are already doing so within a discursive realm. In Butler's (1999/1990: 11) words, there is no body "that has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings". It is in such context that, on the one hand, Butler rightly argues that the body cannot escape cultural signification while, on the other, she regrettably falls into a Cartesian reductionism which reduces the body to an object of the mind. I will first outline the aspects of her contentions which I intend to retain and then will highlight the pitfalls in her arguments which I wish to avoid.

To begin with, I certainly agree with Butler (1999/1990, 1993) when she argues that to overcome the Cartesian dualism we must not separate the way we theorise and think of our bodies from the way we experience and live them – each is mutually implicated in the other. On this ground, Butler wishes to avoid reductionism and explaining our experiences and actions by recurring to either the body or the mind – one of the two Cartesian 'substances'. The former solution is a type of materialism, such as that characterising popular neurophysiological accounts which reduce consciousness to complex neural activity. The latter is a form of idealism, as in the classic interpretations of Platonic philosophy, where matter is a denigrated manifestation of the Idea, and the world we experience becomes a product of our mind.

Promisingly, Butler (1993: 66, original emphasis) distances herself from those social constructionism reductionisms which have often been blamed for falling into idealistic positions:

> The materiality of the body ought not to be conceptualised as a unilateral or causal *effect* of the psyche in any sense that would reduce that materiality to the psyche or make of the psyche the monistic stuff out of which that materiality is produced and/or derived. This latter alternative would constitute a clearly untenable form of idealism.

Again, she intends to go beyond a "dualistic relationship between a signifying immateriality and the materiality of the body itself" (Butler, 1999/1990: 209). She points out that allegations of being an idealist or a reductionist would be based not only on a misunderstanding of her thought, but indeed on the very dualistic assumptions which underpin these accusations and set language and matter in opposition. Butler states that "language and materiality are fully embedded in each other" (1993: 69), and therefore cannot be conceived of separately: "[l]anguage and materiality are not opposed, for language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified" (ibid.: 68).

According to Butler, rather than opposed, language and matter are intertwined in the contingency of the same historical process – in the words of Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco (2005: 45-46, original emphasis), for Butler, "*as* a process, materialization must necessarily be temporal. Hence, matter does not 'exist' in and of itself, for *all* the time, but is instead repeatedly produced *over* time through performativity". Here the notion of performativity is conceived of as the reiteration of speech acts, social practices, and cultural norms which produce (and reproduce) 'reality' – including material and immaterial dimensions – as we experience it (Butler, 1999/1990, 1993).

In Butler's (1993: 13) words, "performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names". In this way, for Butler, "[o]ne is not simply a body, [rather] one does one's body" (1988: 521), which thus acquires its materiality (as well as both gender and sex) in the form of "a legacy of sedimented acts rather than a predetermined or foreclosed structure, essence or fact, whether natural, cultural, or linguistic" (1988: 523). Therefore, matter itself is performatively produced in the sense that it is the product of "*a process of materialisation that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*" (Butler, 1993: 9, original emphasis).

Thus, so far, there is a common ground between Butler's and this study's aims, i.e., those of avoiding dualism(s) and setting in opposition mind and body or language and corporeality. Here, mind, discourse, and the semiotic dimension are not less actual than matter or possessing less

agentic powers than the material body. Yet, Butler also makes a mistake which the present research wishes to avoid and does not seem to achieve her aim. That is, rather than making a distinction *between* the ontological unity of language and corporeality *and* the different properties possessed by the material and symbolic aspects of embodiment at the epistemological level, she ultimately produces an account where everything is reduced to discourse.

In this way, it does not come as a surprise that Butler (1993: 8) appears to have trouble with defining the relationship between an extra-discursive material realm and a symbolic domain:

> For there is an 'outside' to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute 'outside', an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive 'outside', it is that which can only be thought – when it can – in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders.

In a similar vein, below Butler (1993: 69) struggles to qualify the language-materiality relationship:

> [C]hiasmic in their interdependency, but never fully collapsed into one another, i.e., reduced to one another, and yet neither fully ever exceeds the other. Always already implicated in each other, always already exceeding one another, language and materiality are never fully identical nor fully different.

Perhaps the reader may be wondering: 'is there or is there not an outside to discourse?' Or, 'what, then, is the character of the relationship between language and materiality?' While these are questions which, as it will become clear later, can be more easily answered by explicitly acknowledging the chiasmic, paradoxical, and dual character of embodiment (which Butler only hints at), at the moment it suffices to note that, in the words of the physicist and feminist theorist Karen Barad, although Butler attempts to amend "Foucault's […] failure to theorize the relationship between discursive and nondiscursive" (2007: 63), "it is not at all clear that Butler succeeds in bringing the discursive and the material into closer proximity [and therefore the q]uestions about the material nature of discursive practices seem to hang in the air like the

persistent smile of the Cheshire cat" (ibid.: 64). Unable to qualify in detail the discourse-materiality relationship, according to Barad (ibid.), when conceptualising such a relationship, Butler would still favour one element over the other, namely language over corporeality, and mind over body.

In fact, Butler (1993: ix) herself acknowledges that every time she touches on bodies' materiality she ends up recurring to the discursive domain to explain it. Seen from the multidimensional approach endorsed by the present study, Butler, like Foucault, is only addressing the symbolic dimension of our embodied experiences, while ignoring altogether the corporeal properties of the body and the embodied agent's phenomenological world. Hence, despite her defence, it is difficult not to see the spectre of idealism, and, unsurprisingly, this reduction of the material body to the immaterial symbolic realm has been noted by many, and Butler, as Foucault, has been repeatedly criticised for disregarding the materiality of the body as such.

All in all, I intend to take on board Foucault's and Butler's most helpful arguments. One is that we must not set the material and the discursive in opposition. Linked to this, it is equally crucial to acknowledge that discourse is not less actual than matter when it comes to bringing about change in the world. At the same time, however, we need to avoid reducing the multidimensional richness of our embodied character to the sole symbolic dimension of mind, and acknowledge that mind and body possess different properties. In terms of temporality, for instance, a body does not come into existence at the same time and speed as a discourse – despite the fact that the two are inextricably linked. As pointed out by Ian Burkitt (1999: 95), "[t]he symbolic realm is always integrated with the material, and while it is impossible to separate them, they should not be collapsed together".

In addition, there is the issue of the neglect of phenomenological life of the embodied agent. Here discourse is only considered from an outer perspective and never from an inner standpoint. In this way, there is a disregard of the inner world of the embodied agent and of internal environments of embodiment – a common ground shared by the major approaches to embodiment, in spite of their

41

considerable differences. On this ground, if not developed further, the insights of the linguistic turn can only lead to a Cartesian landscape and to theorising the body only as a passive object of social and cultural practices rather than also as a generator of them. In fact, it seems clear that Butler (1988: 519, original emphasis) ultimately conceptualises "the social agent as an *object* rather than the subject of constitutive acts".

Indeed, since the early 1990s, within the so-called corporeal turn, a number of body theorists raised criticisms of the discursive/linguistic conception of embodiment in a vein not too dissimilar to that outlined above. The corporeal turn aimed at bringing together mind and body, the objectified and pre-objective body, and language and corporeality – at including, in other words, both immaterial and material dimensions of our embodied condition. Importantly, a number of authors involved in this turn appear to suggest a multidimensional view of embodiment as a phenomenon possessing a paradoxical, chiasmic, and dual character. As I have done with the linguistic turn, also with the corporeal turn I will outline the contributions to take on board and will point out the dead ends to eschew.

Chapter 3: THE CORPOREAL TURN

3.1 Bringing Mind and Body Together

In the middle of the 1990s the discursive approach to the body of the linguistic turn was already being criticised in one of the major journals dedicated to the body in social theory – *Body and Society*. In introducing the journal's first issue, when the editors Mike Featherstone and Bryan Turner (1995: 1) observed that it "is difficult to avoid the presence of the body as a sign and symbol of social and political processes", they captured the manner in which the body had been considered since becoming prominent in the field. And when they remarked that "[a] second area, which has been relatively underdeveloped, is the analysis of the active role of the body in social life", Featherstone and Turner (ibid.: 3) also acknowledged an imbalance in sociological interests towards the objectified and discursive body at the expense of the lived and phenomenal body.

Linked to this, Featherstone and Turner (ibid: 3) also warned us of the danger of creating a fracture between these two approaches to the body, and noted that "[a]ll too often in the recent sociological literature on the body these two aspects are presented as mutually exclusive analytical divisions from which we must choose". Within the same journal's issue, Nick Crossley (1995: 43) also appeared motivated to bring together these two strands of body studies – what he calls the 'sociology of the body' and 'carnal sociology' – in one unified and integrated 'carnal sociology of the body':

> If sociology is to take the body seriously, I contend, then it must embrace both of these perspectives and it must understand them to be twin aspects of a single problematic: the carnal sociology of the body. This is necessary because both perspectives, on their own, have the potential to dissociate and externalize the body and the social world, reifying both and, thereby, constituting a dualistic and reductionist approach to social analysis.

By highlighting the danger of dualism, but by implicitly acknowledging the dual (or 'twin', in his words) character of embodiment, Crossley (1995: 3, original emphasis) urges us to address both "what is *done* to the body [and] what the body *does*".

Arguments like those above came to be identified as part of the corporeal turn in the social sciences (see Sheets-Johnstone, 2009), which stemmed from the acknowledgement that within the cultural inscription model corporeality is replaced by signs and symbols and is therefore never addressed as such (Blackman, 2008). That is, if *only* theorised within discourse, the 'actual', material, and corporeal body – as we experience it – disappears to be substituted by a metaphor or a text (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). Moreover, these criticisms also share a view of a body that, despite being moulded and constrained by dominant discourses and discursive practices, has a generative potential (McNay, 1999).

As argued by Raewyn Connell (2010/1995: 58), bodies can be "recalcitrant, they disrupt and subvert the social arrangements into which they are invited". In a similar vein, Chris Shilling and Philip A. Mellor (1995: 2, original emphasis) contended that:

> [P]eople's experiences of, and responses to, social structures are shaped by their *sensory* and *sensual* selves. These variables are important as they can exert an important impact on whether people *feel* at ease with, and tend to reproduce, the 'rules' and the 'resources' most readily accessible to them, or sensorily experience these 'structures' as unpleasant, undesirable and worthy of transformation.

What is, Shilling and Mellor ask, the role of the body when people endorse certain discourses and resist others? Here the paradoxical character of the body is brought to the fore: the body *both* constitutes *and* is constituted by society, it is *both* subject *and* object of social practices, *both* a natural *and* cultural phenomenon, and we are *both* sensuous *and* social beings – multidimensional embodied beings (Burkitt, 1999, Shilling, 2012/1993).

If it seems to be correct to argue that, as Foucauldians would contend, the discursive realm mediates if not regulates our epistemological horizons, we need to acknowledge that the sensuous

body is, however, our original source of knowledge. As observed by Burkitt (1999: 94) when commenting on Butler, "despite all the discourse about the body, one never gets the sense of a lived, material body". Indeed, language both mediates and gives access to our lived experience, and the body both constitutes and is constituted by discourse.

Therefore, the corporeal turn sought to meaningfully bring together mind and body, the objectified and the pre-objective body, and language and corporeality. And it is to these two latter dimensions of embodiment which I will first turn my attention by outlining the arguments of Csordas, who notes that language and corporeality are not separate from one another. Following this, I will discuss Grosz's call for novel conceptual tools to address the paradoxical character of the body, and I will elucidate Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic and dual perspective of embodiment. Then I will conclude with a critique of actor-network theory – an influential theoretical framework which, regrettably, tends to conflate the different dimensions of embodiment. My aim here is to first highlight the arguments to retain and then the pitfalls to avoid of the corporeal turn.

3.2 The Objectified Body and the Pre-Objective Body – The Disclosing Nature of Language

In line with corporeal theorists, Csordas (1994) contends that in most extant approaches the body is still conceptualised as a product of mind – i.e., a Cartesian, objectified, and represented body. Yet, Csordas (ibid.: 7, original emphasis) notes, "our bodies are not originally objects for us [but rather] the ground of perceptual processes that *end* in objectification". In fact, for Csordas (ibid.: 7) "the play between preobjective and objectified bodies within our own culture is precisely what is at issue in many of the contemporary critiques". In turn, such play boils down to the Cartesian paradigm which, Csordas points out, is not to blame for the very phenomenological distinction between mind and body, but rather for reifying the body as a mere object in the world.

In this respect, Csordas cites a conversation that occurred between the missionary anthropologist Maurice Leenhardt (1979/1947, in Csordas, 1994: 6) and an indigenous Canaque philosopher.

While Leenhardt suggested that the notion of an immaterial 'spirit' was introduced in New Caledonian culture by the Christian missionaries, the aged sage held the opposite view: the concept of the spirit had always been salient in Canaque culture; what had been imported by a Western and materialistic perspective was the notion of 'the body' in a culture where, instead of being bodily self-contained, a person was distributed among other persons and things within a socio-mythic and psychophysical realm. According to Leenhardt (ibid.: 7):

> ['The body'] had no existence of its own, nor specific name to distinguish it. It was only a support. But henceforth the circumscription of the physical being is completed, making possible its objectification. The idea of a human body becomes explicit. This discovery leads forthwith to a discrimination between the body and the mythic world.

And, Csordas (1994) observes, the reification of the body as an object in the world as any other also underpins a long series of dualisms, such as that between subject and object, culture and biology, the theoretical and the practical, textuality and experience, and language and corporeality. By highlighting that the first term of these relationships is that privileged in the study of the body, Csordas (ibid.: 11) asserts that there is a "dominance of semiotics over phenomenology [and therefore of] the problem of representation over the problem of being-in-the-world". In other words, for Csordas, the dominant view of language as a dimension unable to provide access to our corporeal dimension is an outcome of the Cartesian objectification of the body.

By not conceptualising language and our phenomenological world on two separated planes, Csordas (ibid.: 11) intends to go beyond the trite argument entailing that "[y]ou cannot really study experience, because all experience is mediated by language – therefore one can only study language and discourse, i.e. representation". As opposed to this Cartesian and representationalist view of language, by evoking Heidegger, Csordas (ibid.: 11) notes that "language not only represents or refers, but 'discloses' our being-in-the-world". Thus, language resembles the paradoxical character of the lived body, which is *both* a represented body, i.e., a "readable text upon which social reality is 'inscribed' [and] a creature of representation" (ibid.: 12), *and* a phenomenal body, i.e., the "existential ground of culture and self" (ibid.: 4).

Aiming to counterbalance the dominance of semiotic over phenomenological analyses, Csordas (ibid.: 4) urges "a more radical role for the body" in research, which would entail (re)taking into serious consideration the notion of embodiment. Crucially for this study's aims, Csordas' (ibid.: 4) proposal of starting from the notion of embodiment is not an attempt to get rid of the linguistic model, but rather – precisely consistent with the concept of embodiment – an effort to meaningfully conceptualise the relationship between language and corporeality by "using the body as a methodological starting point". It is this specific preoccupation with the relationship between language and the body, and his emphasis on language's ability to access corporeality, which distinguishes Csordas from other corporeal theorists, and which I wish to take on board in my re-conceptualisation of embodiment.

In fact, I will go back to Csordas' contentions when re-discussing the language-corporeality relationship in the case study. At the moment, however, I wish to outline the arguments of a theorist who seems to be particularly concerned with the mind-body dualism. This is Grosz, who, by making especially visible the paradoxical character of embodiment, evokes novel conceptual tools to address the body's elusive nature and thus move from anti-Cartesian to post-Cartesian territories.

3.3 The Paradoxical Body – The Need for Novel Conceptual Tools

Rather than eschewing it, vilifying it, or explaining it away, Grosz (1994: 7) appears to be one of the few body theorists who faces the mind-body dualism head-on – as she points out, the long-term significance of the mind-body relationship should warn us against reductionisms and any form of dualism:

> Dualism […] poses irresolvable philosophical problems [and] establishes an unbridgeable gulf between mind and matter. […] To reduce either the mind to the body or the body to the mind is to leave their interaction unexplained, explained away, impossible.

Like the current thesis does, Grosz (1994) notes that we are still conceptually trapped within the Cartesian paradigm, and lack the conceptual tools to theorise our embodied condition without resorting to either one or the other of these two 'substances': the material body and the immaterial mind. To move on from this impasse, she puts forward novel conceptual tools which can account for the paradoxical character of embodiment. For instance, to explicate the elusive nature of the body, Grosz (ibid.) employs the metaphor of a flame. The living organism – the embodied agent – is here conceptualised as a process, a flame, which however keeps its permanence, its unity and 'identity', despite being continuously re-constituted by novel material. Here the body is both many and one, open and closed, a process and a structure – i.e., it is paradoxical by nature.

I am using the adjective 'paradoxical' here in the classical sense. Indeed, Grosz's metaphor of the flame very much resembles a well-known classical paradox: *The Ship of Theseus*, a paradox written by Plutarch (in McGilchrist, 2010/2009: 138). As they decayed, the old planks of the ship which took Theseus back to Athens from Crete were continuously replaced by new and stronger ones, to the point at which none of the original planks were still in place (ibid.). As with a flame that keeps on burning different material while maintaining its identity, one could legitimately ask: is the entirely restored ship the same ship on which Theseus returned to Athens?

Clearly, Theseus' ship could be any living body, which at molecular level (let alone atomic and sub-atomic levels) changes all the time yet – paradoxically – maintains its identity. Pre-platonic philosophers, such as Heraclitus for instance, were in no way perturbed by these types of 'illogic' examples, which were employed precisely to show the limits of an either/or and linear logic (ibid.) (quantum physics being a contemporary demonstrator of these limits from the natural sciences' perspective – see Barad, 2007; for quantum physics applied to social sciences, see also Wendt, 2015).

In a similar vein, Grosz (1994) also borrows the concept of the Möbius strip from Jacques Lacan as a further and helpful metaphor to account for mind and body, and internal and external dimensions of embodiment, without conceiving of them as separate entities. The Möbius strip is a

continuous closed surface which can be formed by rotating one end of a rectangular strip 180° and attaching it to the opposite end. The result is a three-dimensional figure of eight which, if imaginarily walked upon along its entire length – i.e., along both surfaces – would return the walker to the initial point without her crossing any edge of the strip. As one side of the strip 'becomes' the other without the need to cross any edge, it is as if there were no boundaries between the two surfaces of the strip.

Similarly, external environments of embodiment enfold into internal environments, and vice versa. Likewise, Grosz (ibid.) asserts, mind and body would twist into each other – i.e., one dimension would become more prominent than the other – without the need to cross any actual gap. Moreover, as in a domino effect, Grosz (ibid.) adds, once we employ this metaphor, the other dualisms underpinning Western thought, such as individual-society, agency-structure, intellect-affect, culture-nature, and language-matter, can also break down and come to constitute dynamic unities without involving conflation between the two terms of these relationships.

Importantly for the present study's arguments, in this way, we can move beyond the limits of an either/or logic, and we can therefore retain *both* an analytical distinction between two terms *and* acknowledge that they cannot be considered as ontologically separate from each other. In addition, these types of metaphors can help us to avoid the dangers not only of idealistic or materialistic reductionist shortcuts, but also of sterile one-dimensional forms of holism or monism – all of them may end up explaining away the Cartesian dualism rather than proposing valid alternatives.

Furthermore, Grosz (ibid.) points out that, after all, metaphors and models are merely heuristic devices, and as such are not able to fully account for the elusive character of our bodies and the enigmatic mind-body relationship. While I would agree with her contention here, with the present research I also intend to show that, although unable to provide definite answers to what are fundamentally ultimate questions, useful metaphors and conceptual strategies can nevertheless provide us with effective instruments to engage with the paradoxical character of the body which, to employ Grosz's (1994: xi) words once more, is:

[The] most peculiar thing, for it is never quite reducible to being merely a thing; nor does it ever quite manage to rise above the status of thing. Thus it is both a thing and a nonthing, an object, but an object which somehow contains or coexists with an interiority, an object able to take itself and others as subjects, a unique kind of object not reducible to other objects.

In the above quotation Grosz draws on the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, whose view of embodiment as a phenomenon caught between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension is one of the major theoretical influences which this study draws on. In addition, the phenomenological nuances involved in our embodied condition are extremely significant for the self-cultivation practices employed by this thesis as a case study, which aim at tapping into the depths of the tacit knowledge of the body.

Therefore, I will momentarily suspend my chronological outline of body studies to discuss the relevant aspects of Merleau-Ponty's theorising of the body. Although, differently from Foucault, issues of power and social inequality do not seem to be addressed by the French phenomenologist, as Shilling (2012/1993: 244) notes in referring to Crossley's writings, "[i]t is the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty […] that has been most influential in shaping calls for a 'carnal sociology', the founding assumption of which was that 'self', 'society', and 'symbolic order' are constituted through the work of the body".

3.4 The Chiasmic Body – The Dual Character of Embodiment

For Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962), the body is not as any other object in the world for the embodied agent. Rather, the body is what fundamentally brings about a world for the subject. One cannot move away from her own body, or observe it from different angles or distances. The body of the subject is always there – the body is one's perspective on the world. At the same time, however, the body can also be an object for the subject – when one, for instance, touches her own body. In this way, the body possesses an ambiguous and paradoxical character – it is both subject and object. And it continuously shifts between these two modes, which can become more or less

salient. The metaphor provided by Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 106) of two hands touching each other is a classic example in this respect:

> The two hands are never simultaneously in the relationship of touched and touching to each other. When I press my two hands together, it is not as a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the roles of touching and being touched […P]assing from one role to the other, I can identify the hand touched in the same one which will in a moment be touching. In other words, in this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them. The body catches itself while being touched, and initiates 'a kind of reflection' which is sufficient to distinguish it from objects.

Here we can fully appreciate the unceasingly shifting nature of our body revealing its dual character – the touching and the being touched, the subject and the object, mind and body, are inextricably linked and yet distinguished. Hence, the terms of these relationships are neither separated nor conflated – there is, rather, a unity in their divergence. Merleau-Ponty (1968: 141) uses again the metaphor of the two hands touching each other to elucidate this:

> When one of my hands touches the other, the world of each opens upon that of the other because the operation is reversible at will, because they both belong (as we say) to one sole space of consciousness, because one sole man [sic] touches one sole thing through both hands […M]y two hands touch the same things because they are the hands of one same body. And yet, each of them has its own tactile experience.

This is reiterated by Grosz (1994: 100) when she observes that:

> Between feeling (the dimension of subjectivity) and being felt (the dimension of objectuality) is a gulf spanned by the indeterminate and reversible phenomenon of the being touched of the touching, the crossing over of what is touching to what is touched, the ambiguity which entails that each hand is in the (potentially reversible) position of both subject and object, the position of both phenomenal and objectual body.

It is by means of this ambiguous space, of this reversibility and unity in opposition of the 'phenomenal and objectual body', of this dual nature of embodiment, that our lived experience takes place. For Merleau-Ponty (1968: 123), our perception of the world is the outcome of the diverging character of the body – in his words:

> When I find again the actual world such as it is, under my hands, under my eyes, up against my body, I find much more than an object: a Being[1] of which my vision is a part, a visibility older than my operations or my acts. But this does not mean that there was a fusion or coinciding of me with it: on the contrary, this occurs because a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we may say that the things pass into us, as well as we into the things.

Again, our embodied condition is the 'overlapping or encroachment' of two modes from which the relationships between subject and object, self and world, open and closed, one and many, immaterial and material, and mind and body, are generated – there is no absolute distinction between these pairs, but neither are they exactly the same.

Therefore, for Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 451) the ambiguous, paradoxical, and dual body which enacts our world is not a body-object, but rather is a *lived body*, a process which expresses our lived experience through which the world reveals itself to us: "[o]ur body […] is inseparable from a view of the world and is that view itself brought into existence". In this way, the subject and the world are co-constituted. The lived body acts upon the world and the world acts upon the body – they mutually shape each other and are in fact ultimately inseparable. For Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 499), being an embodied agent means being-in-the-world:[2]

---

[1] It is worth noticing that Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'Being' to indicate what in the current study is called 'Becoming'.

[2] Here the hyphens are meant to emphasise that 'being', 'in', and 'world' cannot be ontologically separated (Thompson, 2007).

> The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects. The subject is a being-in-the-world.

Indeed, as is explained by social anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011: 12), for Merleau-Ponty, "our perception of the world is no more and no less, than the world perception of itself – in and through us".

In his last and unfinished work – *The Visible and the Invisible* – Merleau-Ponty (1968) was facing the paradoxical nature of the body and the inexplicable mind-body and subject-object relationships. In this work he advanced the notion of the *flesh* to explicate how our embodied condition is *both* brought about by *and* brings about our world. Most importantly for this study's arguments, with the flesh, Merleau-Ponty places, grounds, or envelops all relationships – including mind and body – in one immanent dimension.

In fact, the "flesh is not matter [n]or some 'psychic' material" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 139), and therefore both immaterial and material experiential dimensions, as well as all the shades and 'things' in-between, are the product of a chiasm in the flesh. As reiterated by Grosz (1994: 95), "'the flesh' [is] a term providing the pre-conditions and the grounds for the distinctions between mind and body, subject and object, and self and other". In a similar vein, philosopher Atherton Lowry (1979: 295) notes that "the flesh […] is the field where things take on dimensions".

Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, all things in the world are the outcome of a process that at the same time reveals and conceals – i.e., the flesh opening onto itself by means of the phenomenon of embodiment, which possesses therefore a dual character. Again in Grosz's (1994: 100) words: "[f]lesh is being's reversibility, its capacity to fold in on itself, a dual orientation inward and outward". Here embodiment is a *chiasm* between a pre-individual (the invisible) and an individuated (the visible) dimension – it is a process involving these two dimensions. This same point is well restated by Lowry (1979: 296):

> [A] convergence of opposites where the two sides of this single experience, namely flesh as sensing and the flesh sensed, simultaneously embrace each other in one and the same movement. Each side reverses itself and becomes the other as an intertwining of opposites which twist round one another […] The flesh is the field where things happen, where they become visible and radiate out of their dimensionality. Precisely because [things] disclose themselves in this field they take on flesh.

While Merleau-Ponty (1968) rarely uses the term 'chiasm', this metaphor is clearly what he had in mind when he was thinking of the process by means of which the flesh takes on dimensions. The concept of the flesh is in fact outlined in the influential chapter of *The Visible and the Invisible* titled 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm'. Being caught, or being a mediator, between two modes, the body "is a two-dimensional being" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 136) – a chiasm opening into the texture of the flesh, from which our phenomenological life emerges. It is through this 'convergence of opposites' which the world is disclosed to us as meaningful, and thus any form of knowledge produced.

And it is the chiasm – i.e., the emergence of our phenomenological world – Merleau-Ponty's target. Yet, his investigation into the roots of our lived experience does not lead him to the Cartesian conclusion of the existence of a 'thinking thing', a mind which transcends the material world and yet is inexplicably able to have an influence upon the body, but rather to the existence of an immanent ongoing process, a chiasmic body opening into the flesh – i.e., the world becoming conscious of, or actualising, itself. Here mind and body are intertwined and part of the same process which brings about the multidimensional richness of our lived experienced.

Moreover, and importantly, for the continental philosopher, tapping into the chiasm does not imply the existence of an experience which is 'authentic', 'real', or 'uncontaminated' by language, culture, and social life. Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: xvi) acknowledges the implications of our lived experience with the socio-cultural world, and therefore for him the notion of an experience untouched by the social – a thoroughly pre-individual or pre-discursive experience – is highly problematic because "our existence is too tightly held in the world to be able to know itself as such at the moment of its involvement". Yet, differently from Foucault and Butler, Merleau-Ponty

recognises the limits of analyses which neglect the immediacy of our lived experience and see it as merely constructed through language and culture. For Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 44, original emphasis):

> The intellectualist process of self-discovery does not penetrate as far as this living nucleus of perception because it is looking for the conditions which make it *possible* or without which it would not exist, instead of uncovering the operation which brings it *into reality*, or whereby it is constituted.

Thus, to unveil how our lived experience is brought 'into reality', Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962) neither intends to take our lived experience for granted, i.e. taking it at face value, such as in the positivist accounts of what he calls 'empiricisms', nor endorse the extreme suspicion of the immediate knowledge of our sensuous body of what he calls 'intellectualisms'. Both would be equally inconclusive and dogmatic positions. Rather, his purpose is to address the disclosure of our lived experience to the limits of our phenomenal world, to this elusive in-between space where our experiences are lived out but not reflectively known and amenable to being put into words.

There is therefore an ambiguous tension between the visible and invisible, the pre-individual and the individuated, what we can and cannot consciously know 'outside' of language games, a struggle to conceive of an extra-semiotic domain, which somewhat resonates with Butler's troubles when she attempts to qualify the 'outside of discourse' (see chapter 2.3). These problems appear to be particularly evident in the working notes of *The Visible and the Invisible*, where Merleau-Ponty (1968: 170-171, original emphasis) is confronting the difficulties (if not impossibilities) of conceptualising a subjectivity without language – i.e., of envisaging a 'tacit cogito':

> The Cogito of Descartes (reflection) is an operation of significations […] It therefore presupposes a pre-reflective contact of self with […] a tacit cogito […] This is how I reasoned in *Ph. P.* [(Phenomenology of perception)] Is this correct? What I call the tacit cogito is impossible. To have an idea of 'thinking' (in the sense of 'thought of seeing and of feeling'), to make the 'reduction', to

return to immanence […] it is necessary to have words. It is by the combination of words […] that I *form* the transcendental attitude, that I *constitute* the constitutive consciousness.

By realising that the phenomenological project to get to an unmediated experience might be in fact impracticable, Merleau-Ponty seems to recognise that language does need to be part of the whole picture – a contention taken into serious consideration by the present study. While in earlier theorising he argues that "[l]ooking for the world's essence is not looking for what it is as an idea once it has been reduced to a theme of discourse; it is looking for what it is as a fact for us, before any thematization" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002/1962: xvii), in his last unfinished endeavour, he appears to be more dubious and affirms that he is *not* looking for:

> [T]he return to the immediate, the coincidence, the effective fusion with the existent, the search for an original integrity, for a secret lost and to be rediscovered, which would nullify our questions and even reprehend language. If coincidence is lost, this is no accident; if Being is hidden, this is itself a characteristic of Being, and no disclosure will make us comprehend it. A lost immediate, arduous to restore, will, if we do restore it, bear within itself the sediment of the critical procedures through which we will have found it anew; it will therefore not be the immediate. If it is to be the immediate, if it is to retain no trace of the operations through which we approach it, if it is Being itself, this means that there is no route from us to it and that it is inaccessible by principle (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 122).

As occurred when discussing Butler's 'outside of discourse', this time the reader might again ask: 'do we then have access or not to a pre-discursive realm?', or 'can we attain an unmediated/pre-individual experience or not?' As these extremely difficult questions are important for the current study concerned with the tacit knowledge of the body (and its relationship with language), I will explain in more detail Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological project below.

3.5 The Phenomenological Approach – Riding the Cusp

A productive starting point to understand in what way the phenomenological approach is endorsed by the present research is to clarify the phenomenological insight into the indissoluble relationship

between lived experience and world. As noted by the philosopher Evan Thompson (2007), focusing on this relationship does not imply that there is no 'reality' existing independently of our mind. That is, phenomenology, at least in the way I am reading it here, is not an idealistic/solipsistic philosophy. Rather, the phenomenological approach presupposes the existence of a 'real world' independent of, and unknowable by, our mind, which only discloses itself to us as meaningful by means of our lived body – "our general medium for having a world" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002/1962: 169). As posited by Thompson (2007: 21, original emphasis), although we are unable to know "*what things are* [we have access to] the *ways in which things are given*".

Hence, although we do not have access to 'reality' (the Kantian thing-in-itself, as I am using it here), we do have direct access to what literary critic Katherine Hayles (1997/1991, in Timeto, 2011: 157) calls the 'cusp' between us and the 'flux' – the flux being that which exists unknowably by and independently of our mind: a truly pre-individual dimension. In Hayles' words (1995, in Timeto, 2011: 159-160), "[i]f it is true that 'reality is what we do not see when we see', then it is also true that 'our interaction with reality is what we see when we see'".

Consistently with the notions of the flesh and its chiasm, more than a partial/limited version of 'reality', implying a monolithic/static/disembodied conception of the 'real', 'what we see' is precisely what is brought about by our contingent interaction with the 'flux'. It is then on our interaction with the flux – that is, on the cusp, this *in-between* space – that according to Hayles (1997/1991, in Timeto, 2011: 157) we should concentrate our epistemological attention:

> Thinking only about the outside of the cusp leads to the impression that we can access reality directly and formulate its workings through abstract laws that are universally true. Thinking only about the inside leads to solipsism and radical subjectivism. The hardest thing in the world is to ride the cusp, to keep in the foreground of consciousness both the active transformations through which we experience the world and the flux that interacts with and helps to shape those transformations.

In a similar fashion, Grosz (1994: 94) notes that:

> Merleau-Ponty […] attempts to take up and utilize the space in between, the 'no-man's land' or gulf separating oppositional terms. This impossible, excluded middle predates and makes possible the binary terms insofar as it precedes and exceeds them, insofar as it is uncontainable in either term.

As discussed earlier, for the French philosopher this space is not a divide; rather it is a space which distinguishes between the subject and the world while, at the same time, providing the continuity between them (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1993/1991). Even if we do not have access to a purely pre-discursive experience – i.e. to what 'really' exists, the thing-in-itself – we can however investigate our lived experience as a disclosure, middle way, *entre-deux* (ibid.). This is the territory where the transcendent becomes immanent – it is "a *mode of givenness*" (Thompson, 2007: 27).

And, as already noted above, the way phenomenology seeks to explore such an *entre-deux* (or 'ride the cusp' in Hayles' terms), is not by taking for granted the world as we experience it – this would mean falling into naïve realism (Thompson, 2007). Nor is it done by denying the 'reality' of our experience altogether – this would be a solipsistic and equally dogmatic position (ibid.). It is instead done by means of the philosophical procedure known as 'phenomenological reduction' (ibid.). Instead of being doubted, considered illusionary, or naively accepted as genuine, our lived experience is analysed exactly as perceived (ibid.). In Thompson's (ibid.: 19, original emphasis) words, phenomenological reduction is "interested not in *what* things are in some naïve, mind-independent or theory-independent sense, but rather in exactly *how* they are experienced, and thus as strict relational correlates of our subjectivity". This does not imply suspending, doubting, or erasing our subjective experience, but rather re-living it with a renewed awareness (ibid.).

The Husserlian notion of 'transcendence within immanence' may help to consolidate these arguments in more phenomenological terms. Consistent with the above, as we are unable to contain the world within our lived experience (unless we want to fall into an idealistic and solipsistic conception of subjectivity where the world is the product of our mind), it follows that, in this sense, the world is transcendent – i.e. beyond the grasp of our consciousness (as with

Hayles' flux). However, once the world is constituted by, given, or disclosed to our intentional[3] consciousness by means of our lived body, its transcendence is, in the process of becoming meaningful to us, also immanent (as with Hayles' cusp) to our lived experience – it is part of it. As explicated by Thompson (ibid.: 27, original emphasis):

> [T]ranscendence within immanence […] does not mean that what appears to be beyond or outside the sphere of mental activity is really contained within the mind (in some idealistic or internalist sense). Rather, the crucial point is that the transcendent is given as such by virtue of the intentional activities of consciousness. Thus it falls within the sphere of what is phenomenologically constituted (disclosed or brought to awareness by consciousness). Clearly, this point makes sense only at transcendental level, for at this level the transcendent is understood as a *mode of givenness* or disclosure (one characterising things in the world, but not one's own consciousness). Thus […] what is *really or genuinely transcendent* is also *phenomenologically immanent*.

I hope that the above can provide at least partial answers to the questions related to the possibility of knowing (or not knowing) an extra-semiotic realm, as well as to the nature of the relationship between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension. While a truly transcendent, non-differentiated, and pre-individual domain, that where the mind-body/subject-object divergence has not yet taken place, appears to be indeed unknowable, we can nevertheless attempt to tap into the moment of its origin, conversion, and disclosure – i.e., into the opening of the chiasm. In Merleau-Ponty's (2002/1962: 71) words, "[p]henomenology is […] a study of the advent of being to consciousness".

I invite the reader to bear in mind these clarifications as I will go back to these issues both when discussing the turn to affect and the case study's self-cultivation practices. That said, I wish now to move on to a perspective which appears to go exactly in the opposite direction of the phenomenological approach: actor-network theory (ANT). In fact, the present research's concerns

---

[3] Within the phenomenological tradition, the term 'intentionality' refers to the open character of our consciousness, which always aims beyond itself (Thompson, 2007). In a narrower sense, our consciousness is intentional as, if we are conscious, we are always conscious *of* something (ibid.).

with the complexities of the relationship between mind and body neatly clash with those of actor-network theorists.

As argued by one of the main architects of ANT, Bruno Latour (2005/1999: 16), these interests are precisely the unsolved issues which "should not be overcome, but simply ignored or bypassed". As shown in what follows, ANT shares with the corporeal turn and the current study an interest in bringing together material and immaterial dimensions of embodiment. However, as the present research intends to engage with (rather than overcome, ignore, or bypass) unsolved issues in body studies, ANT is also exemplary of the problematics I wish to avoid.

3.6 The Distributed Body – Conflating the Dimensions of Embodiment

As the name suggests, actor-network theory focuses on networks. It originated within the field of science and technology studies and aimed at mapping out connections and patterns between people (e.g., scientists) and the concepts, materialities, and technologies with which they work (e.g., in laboratories). The elements composing a network can only exist in relation to one another, and are called 'actants'. Actions, practices, and their outcome are thus conceived of as the product of networks of actants, which, in turn, can have material and semiotic connotations.

Like the current research, ANT is therefore concerned with bringing together the semiotic and material dimensions of social practices, and endorses an ontology of relations, processes, and enactments. In the words of John Law (2009: 141):

> Actor network theory is a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities, and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations. Its studies explore and characterize the webs and the practices that carry them. Like other material-semiotic approaches, the actor network approach thus describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and

reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, 'nature', ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements.

This relational emphasis and descriptive commitment concerned with the processual, open-ended, and multiple aspect characterising the phenomenon under analysis applies to the body too, which therefore becomes a 'body multiple' (Mol, 2002), distributed along all the 'nodes' implicated in the network. As noted by Shilling (2012/1993: 99), ANT "emphasises how the body is increasingly 'open' to the connections made by technology, ideas and other (im)material matter".

Yet, while the present study views the body as possessing a dual character – i.e., as being *both* open-ended and many *and* differentiated and one – actor-network theorists appear to only acknowledge the former aspect while utterly neglecting the latter. However, recognising the fundamentally relational and processual character of embodiment – i.e., in the words of Annemarie Mol (2005/1999: 77, original emphasis), subscribing to "a reality that is *done* and *enacted* rather than observed" – does not need to imply the negation of a body's identity, structure, and relatively enduring proprieties. Indeed, if we wish to address the dual character of embodiment, both aspects need to be considered – as previously argued by Grosz, the body is a paradoxical phenomenon which, like a flame, keeps on transforming itself while maintaining its identity.

Indeed, the recognition of both the processual and structural aspects of embodiment – at least at an implicit level – emerges in the following extract taken from a study Mol and Law (2004: 57, original emphasis) conducted on hypoglycaemia:

> You do not have, you are not, a body-that-hangs-together, naturally, all by itself. Keeping yourself *whole* is one of the tasks of life. It is not given but must be achieved, both beneath the skin and beyond, in practice.
>
> However, if we foreground the practices for dealing with reality and do so persistently, the body's 'organic wholeness' is no longer self-evident. But this does not imply that the body we *do* is fragmented, the converse of being whole. If we were to *do* our bodies in ways that fragmented them, death would quickly follow. The body we *do* is neither a whole, nor fragmented. Instead it

has a complex configuration. There are boundaries around the body we do: it is Miriam T. [i.e., one of the study's participants] who shivers when she has a hypo in the night and not Josef, her husband. But these boundaries are semi-permeable: Josef may feel Miriam T.'s hypo for her, and the sweet yoghurt she eats stops her hypo. So long as it does not disintegrate, the body-we-do hangs together. It is full of tensions, however.

Hence, although these are 'semi-permeable', Mol and Law do recognise that there are 'boundaries' to our body. These boundaries both unite the body with, and separate it from, the network in which is located. If these boundaries cease to exist, then 'death would quickly follow'. Nevertheless, these acknowledgments remain rare instances in ANT studies, and, rather than concluding that 'the body we *do* is neither a whole, nor fragmented', I suggest that it might be more productive to theorise the body as being *both* a whole *and* fragmented, *both* differentiated *and* open-ended, *both* one *and* many – in fact, being 'full of tensions' and possessing a dual character.

As an outcome of the exclusive focus on external environments of embodiment and abstract maps of connections, the neither/nor conclusion ultimately yields a conflated/flat/one-dimensional account where both the body's materiality and immateriality disappear, and with them also the embodied agent's corporeality and inner life. In fact, ANT is characterised by a strong anti-humanist stance entailing that non-human actants, including mundane everyday objects, have the same weight of humans in the analyses of social practices. As explained by Jim Johnson[4] (1988), within ANT's perspective there is no discrimination between humans and non-humans, and living and non-living beings, and therefore a mechanical door-closer (the example used in Johnson's paper) is thought to be endowed with the same agentic powers of a human being.

Surely, however, objects do not have the same degree of agency of humans, who are conscious and sensuous beings with feelings, desires, affective states, as well as being capable of engaging in self-reflective processes and bringing about creativity and novelty in the milieu from which they emerged (Ingold, 2011; Shilling, 2012/1993). In this way, as observed by Shilling (2012/1993: 100, original emphasis), with the ANT approach we have breadth at the expense of depth:

---

[4] Here Jim Johnson is a pseudonym employed by Latour in this ANT seminal article.

> ANT is typically highly descriptive, tracing the potentially endless links, connections and assemblages involving bodies. This often results in accounts possessed of impressive scope and breadth, but rarely deals with the *depth* of the corporeal as an emergent and causally significant phenomenon *in its own right*.

By conflating any qualitative difference between all the elements of an assemblage, Shilling points out, ANT utterly ignores the difference which differences can make.

In a similar vein, Ingold (2011) contends that with its exclusive preoccupation with the architectural structure of a network and the neglect of the qualitative differences of its components, ANT eventually produces abstract, static, and lifeless sociological accounts, which, ultimately, end up erasing the actual materiality they intend to address. Aiming at retaining ANT's focus on the relational and material aspects of embodiment, while, however, injecting it with life, experience, and qualitative differences, Ingold adopts the web of a spider as a metaphor of a network endowed with life, and imagines a philosophical debate between two fictional characters: ANT and SPIDER.[5]

ANT theorises the busy yet coordinated activity of his colony as emerging from the complex assemblage made up by individual ants, each being a node of the network – "an *act*-ant" (Ingold, 2011: 90, original emphasis). As ANT explains to SPIDER, "the individual act-ant is not an agent. Rather, agency – i.e., what makes things happen in the colony – is *distributed* throughout the network" (ibid.: 90, original emphasis). However, believing that it is very different from the network which makes up the activity in ANT's colony, SPIDER explains that her web is made up of materials spun from her own body, laid down as she moves around. Hence, rather than being abstract lines merely connecting points, these are the material lines along which she senses and lives in the world.

For instance, when a fly is caught in the web, it is first felt and then reached by SPIDER by means of her web. Therefore, she observes:

---

[5] ANT is a caricature of one of the main actor-network theorists – Latour, while SPIDER is Ingold himself.

The lines of my web are not at all like those of your network. In your world there are just bits and pieces of diverse kinds that are brought together or assembled so as to make things happen. Every 'relation' in the network, then, is a connection *between* one thing and another. As such, the relation has no material presence […] For example, I know when a fly has landed in the web because I can feel the vibrations in the lines through my spindly legs, and it is along these same lines that I run to retrieve it. But the lines of my web do not *connect me* to the fly. Rather, they are already threaded before the fly arrives, and set up through their material presence the conditions of entrapment under which such connections can potentially be established (ibid.: 91, original emphasis)

By starting from the premise that life is defined by the coupling of action and perception or movement and feeling (more on this in the case study), Ingold points out the important qualitative distinction between living and non-living beings. As SPIDER explains to ANT, "the essence of action […] lies in the close coupling of bodily movement and perception" (ibid.: 94), one informing the other in a two-way process of co-determination. Such a circular process, SPIDER goes on, involves the development and embodiment of skills, which attune the organism to its environment. Such attunement, in turn, allows the organism's growth to increase further, and develop and embody more sophisticated skills.

Hence, as concluded by SPIDER, "[t]o attribute agency to objects that do not grow or develop, that consequently embody no skill, and whose movement is not therefore coupled to their perception, is ludicrous" (ibid.: 94). To this ANT could only reply: "[w]ell, you would say that, wouldn't you? […] You are SPIDER, and you stand for the proposition that *S*killed *P*ractice *I*nvolves *D*evelopmentally *E*mbodied *R*esponsiveness" (ibid.: 94, original emphasis). Therefore, it is only living, sensuous, and sentient beings, characterised by the coupling of bodily movement and perception, and the consequent development and embodiment of skills attuned [with/at the level of?] the environment, which can exercise agency and bring about novelty in the context they are located. Objects, however, do not develop and embody skills, become attuned with the environment, and grow, and, therefore, cannot be attributed with agency.

In fact, peculiar embodied skills can make a difference within different networks – as posited by Shilling (2012/1993: 100-101), embodied agents can retain and carry out peculiar characteristics which are, albeit only in part, located within their bodies:

> Skills may not be contained entirely in the body, for example, but it would be wrong to overlook the habitual, creative physical capacities that distinguish expert practitioners from lay people irrespective of the networks they operate within. [And therefore ANT] does not provide a sense of […] how at any one time particular bodies possess particular capacities for actions.

Therefore, by not taking into account the dual character of embodiment, ANT's focus is exclusively narrowed on an external, relational, and open-ended dimension – i.e., only on the networks along which the embodied agent is distributed, rather than also on the embodied agent as such, i.e., with her own phenomenological life, properties, and ability to bring about novelty in the world. In fact, within this perspective, each element of a network – whether it is a sentient being or a non-sentient object – is endowed with the same degree of agency. It is in this way that ANT appears to be prone to the conflation of the experiential dimensions and analytical categories of embodiment. Complexity is addressed, but only on an abstract and disembodied level of explanation, where, ultimately, neither the material nor the immaterial dimension are taken into account, and where the depths characterising human embodiment are ignored.

All in all, the corporeal turn appeared unable to adequately address the problems vexing body studies from its inception. Despite a multidimensional approach and an at least implicit acknowledgment of the dual character of embodiment, what acquired currency in this academic turn are flat accounts of our embodied condition, which, with ANT, take the form of a clear example of conflation where all the qualitative differences constituting each element of a network and each dimension of an assemblage are erased. In addition, the two interrelated problematics of the exclusive focus on the open-ended dimension and the reduction of our phenomenological life to an epiphenomenon do not seem to have been dealt with. In fact, these obstacles to further developments in body studies will also persist in the latest turn in body studies: the affective turn. As shown below, the affective turn yields a perspective which, despite its helpful insights, is prone

to the risk of an inverse Cartesianism separating mind and body, and assigning the privileged role

to the latter term of the relationship.

Chapter 4: THE AFFECTIVE TURN

4.1 Materiality as More than Matter

Opposed to a static perspective of the world as composed by discrete entities interacting between them, the affective turn consolidated a relational ontology according to which every 'thing' emerges from its entanglement with other 'things', within a process of continuous transformation, an ongoing *becoming*, where the terms of a relation do not pre-exist their interrelating (Blackman & Venn, 2010; see also Barad, 2007). Similar to ANT, rather than 'things', what is constantly transforming here are 'relations'. However, differently from ANT, and consistent with the present research, within this perspective matter is conceived of as lively, sentient, and possessing agency.

Here Whitehead and his animist ontology, where experience is conceived of as immanent to matter, are often evoked (e.g., Stenner, 2011; Stenner & Greco, 2013; see also Fraser, Kember & Lury, 2005; Greco, 2005; Manning, 2010; Venn, 2010). In this respect, the affective turn is associated with new materialisms, where the use of the prefix 'new' intends to emphasise the need and desire for forms of materialism able to account for immaterial phenomena, and thus conceptualise materiality as something more than mere matter (Blackman, 2014; Coole & Frost, 2010; Grosz, 2011, 2017). By borrowing the terminology of Whitehead (1985/1978), I call this worldview a *process-oriented ontology* – indeed, the theoretical framework of this thesis.

In contrast with the post-structuralist/linguistic tendency to conceptualise the body as an inert, passive, and docile surface, a tabula rasa on which culture is inscribed, the concept of affect intends to emphasise the dynamic, living, and moving body. Here the body becomes a source of sensations and feelings, and acquires an active and crucial role – indeed *the* crucial role for many affect theorists – in socio-cultural phenomena. By also considering what the body *can do*, rather than only what the body is, and by also stressing its *processual* nature, rather than only its structural aspects, affect theories conceive of the body as endowed with generative potential,

67

agency, and thus capable of being recalcitrant to discursive imperatives and dominant ideologies (Blackman & Venn, 2010).

Affect also expresses what cannot be put into words – what exceeds a discursive account (ibid.). Here the sensing and sentient body acquires its own embodied meanings and knowledge which are conveyed through tacit, corporeal, and extra-linguistic forms of communication (ibid.). Hence language is not the only way to communicate and exercise power – communication and the exercise of power also take place according to inter-corporeal, extra-semiotic, non-representational, and non-linear processes (Henriques, 2010; Massumi, 2002). Emerging from, or enacted within, a contingent process, bodies cannot be conceived of as separate from their milieu, or from each other (Henriques, 2010; Manning, 2010). Always in the process of becoming, here bodies are envisaged as never finished and open systems, permeable to each other, which can only be defined by their capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies (Blackman & Venn, 2010; Massumi, 2002).

According to this perspective, relationships such as those between mind and body, cognition and affect, language and corporeality, are not fixed but rather open to transformation, and make sense only in light of notions such as co-determination rather than interaction between their terms (Blackman & Venn, 2010; Massumi, 2002). In addition, albeit implicitly, affect theorists appear to recognise the chiasmic and dual nature of the body as a phenomenon caught between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, and aim at tapping into the in-between space both separating and unifying these two realms in a manner which overlaps with phenomenological approaches. Indeed, in relation to a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, a number of scholars within the affective turn (e.g., Blackman, 2008, 2012; Manning, 2010; Massumi, 2002) seem to acknowledge two main levels of explanation – a non-linear logic addressing the processual nature of the phenomenon under analysis, and a linear logic concerned with its structural aspects.

While all the features described above are taken on board in the re-conceptualisation of embodiment proposed by this thesis, I also intend to avoid the pitfalls related to the way the notion of affect has often been employed in contemporary theorising. In this respect, although when turning to affect a shift occurred from a symbolic to a material domain, our inner life seems to be still seen as an analytical category to avoid, and the open-ended dimension of embodiment seems to be still emphasised over questions regarding how the embodied agent maintains a degree of continuity (Blackman, 2008, 2012). In this way, there is both a rupture and a consistency with the linguistic turn (Clough, 2008).

Indeed, the shared neglect of the subject's inner life and the exclusive focus on an open-ended dimension is not the only common ground between the affective turn and the linguistic perspectives, as both approaches are characterised by an inherent idiosyncrasy. That is, by unveiling the ways power works through language practices, the discursive approach intends to facilitate the subject's critical reflexive capacities, yet never actually explores what these capacities are (only in Foucault's interviews are they explicitly acknowledged – see chapter 2.1). Similarly, while within the turn to affect there is an emphasis on other aspects of the embodied agent's inner life – i.e. embodied experiences, feelings, and sensations which tend to exceed the representational and symbolic level – these are rarely addressed from the perspective of the subject (Wetherell, 2012).

Rather, within the affective turn, the focus appears to exclusively remain on matter's capacities for self-organisation at a pre-individual level (Clough, 2008). In this respect, the notion of the pre-individual is often cited in relation to Simondon and his concept of individuation (e.g., Manning, 2010; Venn, 2010). As explained by Blackman and Venn (2010: 20), "[i]ndividuation is a concept developed by Simondon that offers a reformulation of the problematic of subjectivity; it radically decentres the individual in that it considers the individual to be the product of a process of becoming rather than a starting point from which everything else is accounted for".

I will discuss Simondon's (and Spinoza's) theory of individuation later – a theory which entails a field enveloping and thus exceeding the embodied agent and her phenomenal life, but which certainly does not disregard the individual and her lived experience. At the moment, however, it is important to note that, as affect theorists appear to narrow their interests exclusively on a truly pre-individual dimension – i.e., what cannot be felt or experienced by the subject at all – affect tends to be viewed as a force underpinning our actions *only* operating beneath the level of the embodied agent's consciousness, which is thus reduced to the status of epiphenomena.

All in all, rather than developing the insights of the corporeal turn, with the turn to affect the acknowledgment of embodiment as possessing a paradoxical, chiasmic, and dual character remains on an implicit, partial, and ultimately sterile level. That is, while affect theorists seem to recognise both pre-individual and individuated dimensions, and non-linear and either/or logics of embodiment, they nevertheless only concentrate their efforts on the first terms of these relationships. In this way, the relationships between the experiential dimensions of the embodied agent are never qualified, affect is conceptualised as a force which can act upon us but which cannot be acted upon, and the Cartesian gap – an inverse type this time, where the body becomes the privileged term over the mind – is left untouched.

As I have done with the previous strands of body studies, in what follows, by relating Massumi's theorising to those of Merleau-Ponty, I will first highlight the useful arguments of affect theorists – i.e., the implicit acknowledgment of the dual character of embodiment, and the concern with tapping into in-between space between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension. Then I will point out the problems present in the turn to affect – i.e., a conceptualisation of affect as always cut off from cognition and never attuned with it, and the danger of falling into an inverse Cartesianism.

70

4.2 Affect and Phenomenology – Tapping into the Chiasm

Influential on the turn to affect in social theory, Massumi's (2002: 1, original emphasis) book, *Parables for the Virtual,* begins with a phenomenological observation:

> When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It *moves*. It *feels*. In fact, it does both at the same time. It moves as it feels, and it feels itself moving. Can we think a body without this: an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation whereby each immediately summons the other?

Thus, the intertwinement between movement and sensation – which we have already encountered with Ingold (see chapter 3.6) and will encounter again in the case study – plays a pivotal role here. A body which moves and feels (a phenomenal body), and where movement and feelings co-constitute each other, Massumi (ibid.) argues, is not a discursive (represented) body. For Massumi (ibid.: 3), the post-structuralist stress on language "catches the body in a cultural freeze-frame [and t]he notion of movement as qualitative transformation is lacking".

As Massumi (ibid.: 2) notes, in many socio-cultural analyses, the phenomenological concern with movement and sensation has often been discredited as being unable to directly address the structure of the social system, power relations, or strategies of resistance – as previously seen, the linguistic turn exclusively focused on external environments of embodiment, and on ideological, symbolic, and discursive spheres:

> Earlier phenomenological investigations into the sensing body were largely left behind because they were difficult to reconcile with the new understanding of the structuring capacities of culture and their inseparability both from the exercise of power and the glimmers of counter power incumbent in mediated living. It was all about a subject without subjectivism: a subject 'constructed' by external mechanisms. 'The Subject'.

In addition, as the current study does, Massumi (ibid.: 7) acknowledges that a critique of linguistic models exclusively based on discourse, representation, and inscription does not imply that these analytical categories "need to be trashed". Massumi recognises that a discursive approach is

indeed effective at unveiling the subtle but pervasive work of language, the oppressive web of power relations, and the ways discursive practices shape our lived experience, subjectivity, and body. Yet, for Massumi, these models only address one level of explanation, "one particular dimension of the real (the degree to which things coincide with their own arrest)" (ibid: 7) – i.e., a linear either/or logic; while another sphere, the non-linear realm of paradox, the processual aspect, the dynamic vitality of "movement, sensation, and qualities of experience" (ibid: 4, original emphasis) is left out.

In fact, Massumi's concern with movement and sensation, and his recognition of two dimensions of 'the real' and of two related levels of explanation, demonstrates that there is a common ground between affect theorists and phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty (Blackman & Featherstone, 2010). That is, Massumi (2002: 75; see also Manning, 2010) too appears to conceptualise embodiment as a chiasmic phenomenon, functioning as an interface between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension – in his words: "[t]he body figures not as an object, one substantial element among others, but as a part-object, a conversion channel, a transducer". These pre-individual and individuated dimensions are identified by Massumi (ibid.) as the virtual and the actual. The virtual is what is not yet actualised, a field of potential, which has an unknowable, non-representational, and formless character, still unexpressed in the three-dimensional space and linear time of the actual (ibid.). The in-between space between the virtual and the actual is the territory of emergence where the transcendent becomes immanent, the subject-object bifurcation occurs, and the phenomenon of embodiment takes place.

It is precisely within this elusive yet crucial space that, according to Massumi (ibid.), consolidated societal structures can be undone, dominant cultural norms can be unsettled, qualitative transformations can be brought about, and thus change can occur. And, for Massumi (ibid.: 32-33), affect is a conceptual tool which can help us tap into this transformational 'bifurcation point':

> Affect […] is akin to what is called a critical point, or a bifurcation point, or singular point, in chaos theory and the theory of dissipative structures. This is the turning point at which a physical system

paradoxically embodies multiple and normally mutually exclusive potentials, only one of which is selected.

Therefore, Massumi (ibid.: 35) is interested in tapping into the emergence of the phenomenon of embodiment – i.e., into this "two-sided coin", turning point, critical interface between potentiality and actuality. Resembling Merleau-Ponty's arguments (see chapters 3.4 & 3.5), this is the undefinable territory between what we can consciously experience, and what we cannot – the land of disclosure, the middle way between the subject and the world. In Massumi's (ibid.: 35, original emphasis) words:

> What is being termed affect […] is precisely this two-sidedness, the simultaneous participation of the virtual in the actual and the actual in the virtual, as one arises and returns to the other. Affect is this two-sidedness *as seen from the side of the actual thing*, as couched in its perceptions and cognitions. Affect is *the virtual as point of view*.

Again, affect's 'two-sidedness' appears to reflect the chiasmic character of the body – i.e., a body mediating between two dimensions, and thus possessing a dual character. Hence, affect points to the territory of the phenomenological mode of givenness, where and when the world is disclosed to us, and becomes actual and experienced. In Merleau-Ponty's terms, this is the flesh taking on dimensions, transcendence in the process of becoming immanence by means of our body, and the space where the tacit knowledge of the body can be undone.

Stressing the primacy of a non-linear/paradoxical level of analysis, Massumi (ibid.: 30) argues that "the body is as immediately virtual as it is actual", and affect is transcendental, as not yet actualised, but is also immanent, as it is a constitutive part of our lived experience. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze, Massumi (ibid.: 33, my emphasis) clarifies this point by making a subtle distinction between the transcendental and the transcendent, which strongly resonates with the phenomenological notion of 'transcendence within immanence':

73

> Although the realm of intensity [or affect[6]] that Deleuze's philosophy strives to conceptualize is transcendental in the sense that it is not directly accessible to experience, it is not transcendent, it is not exactly outside experience either. It is immanent to it – *always in it but not of it*. Intensity and experience accompany one another like *two mutually presupposing dimensions* or like two sides of a coin. Intensity is immanent to matter and to events, to *mind and body and to every level of bifurcation* composing them and which they compose.

Here not only does Massumi (ibid.: 38) seem to envisage the existence of 'two mutually presupposing dimensions' with two different level of analysis – i.e., an either/or and a non-linear logic – but he also hints at an engagement with phenomenological relationships, which appear to be grounded in a broader non-linear logic and amenable to change. In fact, consistent with this study's approach, Massumi seems to suggest that the terms of relationships such as mind-body, subject-object, culture-nature, cognition-affect, or language-corporeality, "could be seen not as binary oppositions or contradictions, but as resonating levels" (ibid.: 33), "dynamic unities" (ibid.: 8), which "feed forward and back into each other […] in reciprocal becomings" (ibid.: 11).

Yet, Massumi's implicit acknowledgment of the dual character of embodiment, the distinction between different levels of analysis and experiential dimensions, and the engagement with dynamic relationships, are never developed further or brought to the fore. And this is the lacuna which the present research aims to address. That is, rather than reifying dualism(s), this study contemplates the possibility of employing them as dualities, as conceptual tools to account for our experiential world, and advance our understanding of embodiment. How can we avoid *either* holding a dualistic ontological stance and reducing the mind to the body, the body to the mind, *or* conflating the two into a sterile monism? How can we, put another way, conciliate the pluralism of our experiences with a monist perspective?

I believe my preoccupations appear to be best elucidated by two authors Massumi heavily draws on – philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari (2013/1988: 21, original uppercase):

---

[6] Massumi (2002) uses the terms affect and intensity interchangeably.

No, this is not a new or different dualism [...] We invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass. Arrive at the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM – via all the dualisms that are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging.

Importantly, here Deleuze and Guattari urge us to engage with dualisms to actually overcome dualism itself – a strategy which we will see later employed by both Spinoza and DIA practitioners. It is this failure to tackle dualism(s) directly which appears to render Massumi prone to the risks of an inverse Cartesianism, where the body has a primacy over the mind, which therefore becomes a mere epiphenomenon. In fact, many affect theorists appear to only stress affect's capacities for bypassing consciousness, without however considering how conscious deliberations can in turn shape affective patterns (Hemmings, 2005; Wetherell, 2012). I will show below that the risk of conceptualising affect as irremediably cut off from our conscious deliberations animates contemporary debates in body studies concerned with the over-emphasis on pre-individual, anti-intentionalist, and autonomous character of affect.

4.3 Bypassing Consciousness – The Danger of an Inverse Cartesianism

A clear example of an over-emphasis on the pre-individual and anti-intentionalist aspect of affect is provided by non-representational theory (NRT), a perspective mostly associated with cultural geographer Nigel Thrift. As is given away by its name, non-representational theory rightly rejects a cognitivist and representationalist framework. Yet, along with rejection of the Cartesian person and representationalism, NRT appears to reject the embodied agent and her agentic powers (Stenner, 2008). In Thrift's (2008/2007: 7) words, "non-representational theory is resolutely anti-biographical and pre-individual. It trades in modes of perception which are not subject-based".

Hence, despite the fact that (in a sort of *mea culpa*) Thrift states that "it is clearly dangerous to make too little of cognition, as perhaps I did in some of my early papers" (ibid.: 6), and that he

intends "to retain a certain minimal humanism […as] dropping the human subject entirely seems to me to be a step too far" (ibid: 13), it is clear that NRT exclusively focuses on the pre-cognitive – i.e. on that "rolling mass of nerve volleys […which] prepare the body for action in such a way that intentions or decisions are made before the conscious self is aware of them" (ibid.: 7). Here it seems that the locus of knowledge, including intentions and decisions, is always distributed across an open-ended dimension, which we appear unable to address.

Therefore, with NRT we have at the same time an interest in experiences and modes of perceptions, and a disinterest in how they are phenomenologically lived by the subject. In this way, the subject's phenomenological life does not play any causal role in her actions and/or in making a difference in the world, and it appears to be determined by external environments of embodiment in a one-way fashion (Leys, 2011; Wetherell, 2012). That is, our sensations, feelings, and reflexive capacities emerge from material assemblages and spatial sets of configurations in which the embodied agent is located, but are, however, never able to act upon this milieu – here our phenomenological life is conceived of as an irrelevant epiphenomenon. In Thrift's (2008: 85) words:

> A person becomes a shifting ensemble of states that are received and passed on, states over which that person rarely has much in the way of direct control but which can be modulated in the passing in such a way as to produce nuances or even, at the limit, quite new forms of going on.

Yet, the important role played by the embodied agent's conscious experiences and reflexive capacities in this 'modulation in the passing' and in yielding 'new forms of going on' does not seem to be considered (Wetherell, 2012). For instance, Thrift (2008/2007: 75-88) argues that the rise of automobility, as well as other numerous technological innovations, have radically changed the way cities' spaces are assembled, and consequently altered the available modes of experiences in metropolitan areas. As noted by social psychologist Margaret Wetherell (2012: 20), here our lived experience seems to be "automatically triggered by the ways cityscapes are engineered and built", and, therefore, our embodied experiences, reflexive capacities, and agency (if we can call it

so in this theoretical context) appear to be entirely determined by pre-cognitive phenomena upon which we appear unable to act.

Thrift's arguments reflect a conceptualisation of affect as that force which makes us move and has an influence on us, but which is always nonconscious (e.g., Blackman & Venn, 2010; Henriques, 2010; Manning, 2010; Massumi, 2002). For most affect theorists, cognition always comes after affect as a mere accompaniment of it. In other words, these authors seem to stress *only* those instances where our body's movements precede, and are somewhat not attuned with, our conscious awareness, without also considering not only those occurrences where this does not happen, but, more importantly, our capacities to shape these pre-reflective (re)actions.

And Massumi (2002) does not seem to be immune from this tendency, as appears evident from the title of one of his most well-known essays – 'The Autonomy of Affect' – where the Canadian theorist advances his arguments in favour of the primacy of the affective on the cognitive. To do so, Massumi employs a German experimental study in cognitive science which took place in the eighties and revolved around a short film shown to groups of nine-year-old children in three versions. The first was without words. In the second version – the 'factual' version – a voice describing the events was added. The third version – the 'emotional' version – only differed from the second in the fact that the voice accompanying the images had a more emotional connotation. As Massumi (ibid.: 23) summarises, the plot was rather simple:

> A man builds a snowman on his roof garden. It starts to melt in the afternoon sun. He watches. After a time, he takes the snowman to the cool of the mountains where it stops melting. He bids it good-bye and leaves.

The emotional reactions of the children were tested at i) a physiological level – i.e. heartbeat, breathing, and galvanic skin response (the level of electric conductance of the skin which increases with heightened activity of the autonomic nervous system); and ii) a verbal-cognitive level – i.e. the children had to rate the individual scenes of the film on two scales: one was a happy-sad scale, the other a pleasant-unpleasant scale. Massumi (ibid.: 23) defines the study's results "a bit

muddling". The factual version was considered the least pleasant, and was also the least recalled. The emotional version was instead the most remembered, and rated just slightly less pleasant than the first, wordless version, which resulted in being the most pleasant.

Moreover, and, as Massumi comments, even more strangely, the scenes judged most 'sad' were also the most 'pleasant'. This odd link between sadness and pleasantness, Massumi argues, was not due to the fact that the physiological arousal caused by the emotion of sadness was interpreted by the children as a pleasant event (as, at times, might be the case in these types of experiments), as the children's physiological responses related to heartbeat and breathing were higher in the factual version – the most unpleasant and least remembered. On the other hand, the first, non-verbal version was that which yielded the greatest galvanic skin response.

From all the above, Massumi (ibid.: 24, original emphasis) concluded that the children "were physiologically split […and that the results showed] *the primacy of the affective* in image reception". In addition, and more relevantly for this thesis' concern with the relationship between the representational and the non-representational, Massumi (ibid.: 24, original emphasis) asserts that such "primacy of the affective is marked by a gap between *content* and *effect*: it would appear that the strength or duration of an image's effect is not logically connected to the content in any straightforward way". Therefore, it appears that there is a disconnection, a 'split', between a reflective/semiotic content and an affective/physiological effect.

That said, straight after the above quotation, Massumi (ibid.: 24, my emphasis) adds: "[t]his is *not* to say that there is *no connection* and *no logic*. […] What comes out here is that there is no correspondence or conformity between qualities and intensities. If there is a relation, it is of another nature". Thus, is there a relation or not between the symbolic and intensity (or cognition and affect)? And, if yes, what is its nature? Such vagueness in Massumi's arguments appears to evoke Butler's troubles when qualifying the relationship between language and corporeality (see chapter 2.3), or, indeed, the difficulties encountered by Merleau-Ponty when making sense of the relationship between the tacit cogito and the cogito (see chapters 3.5 & 3.6).

As will become clear later when re-reading the relationships between language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational through the dual lens of the present research, the experiential dimensions constituting them can be characterised by *both* a connection *and* a separation – i.e., these are dynamic relationships amenable to change. And, in fact, this appears to be recognised by Massumi (ibid.: 25) when noting that the intertwinement between language and intensity might entail mutual reinforcement, restrainment, or a prevalence of one element over the other, always in resonations and interactions which operate at multiple levels, each level with different logics, rules, and dynamics:

> Language […] is not simply in opposition to intensity. It would seem to function differentially in relation to it. […] The relationship between the levels of intensity and qualification is not one of conformity or correspondence but rather of resonation and interference, amplification or dampening.

Yet, by not explicitly acknowledging the dual character of embodiment, Massumi only emphasises one term of the dualism(s) he engages with, and therefore falls into an inverse Cartesian dualism as he ultimately only considers affect as a dimension cut off from our conscious awareness – i.e., as always being autonomous, pre-individual, and anti-intentional. And it in this way that he reduces our consciousness to a mere epiphenomenon.

However, as historian of science Ruth Leys (2011: 437) contends, it would be untenable to conceive of affect as a separate realm, belonging to a transcendent dimension, which has nothing to do with discourse, ideology, and conscious awareness – in her words, in much of the contemporary theorising of affect:

> The affects must be viewed as independent of, and in an important sense prior to, ideology – that is, prior to intentions, meanings, reasons, and belief – because they are nonsignifying, autonomic processes that take place below the threshold of conscious awareness and meaning.

Consistent with my critique, Leys (2011) contends that by conceptualising affect and discourse as belonging to two sharply distinct domains, and exclusively stressing the unmediated, autonomous,

and self-organising body, affect theorists fall precisely into the mind-body dualism – albeit 'inverse', as, in this instance, the body would be privileged over the mind – that they strive to avoid.

Leys (ibid.) asserts that neglecting the discursive realm, giving affect precedence over ideology and political content, or assigning to affect the chief role in determining our behaviour, would not only disregard the ideological domain, which is clearly salient in our socio-cultural lives, but, more importantly, the neat separation of affect from cognition and language would (re)present once more all the problematics related to the Cartesian dualism, especially those concerned with the inexplicable way in which mind and body (and thus affect and cognition, and matter and language) would resonate with each other. According to Leys (ibid.: 457, original emphasis), Massumi is mistaken:

> [W]hen he commits himself to the (essentially metaphysical) idea that for something to be 'elicited' or intended it must be 'fully' conscious and that, since not all experience can be described in those terms (but can *any* 'experience' be so described?), the only alternative is to regard it as corporeal or material.

In this way, Leys argues, Massumi separates affect (and the material) from the conscious mind (and the immaterial). For Leys (ibid.; see also Lane, 2012) this type of dualist theorising seems to ignore the insight of the phenomenological tradition, which entails that every action, even when not consciously experienced, is always intentional. In fact, for Merleau-Ponty (ibid.; see also Dewey, 1896), our actions, as well as their meaning and meaningfulness, rather than being the outcome of a mechanical reaction to external stimuli, or the disembodied reflexive acts of a transcendent mind – both of which would be conclusions falling into the Cartesian paradigm or an inverse version of it – are purposeful and pragmatic bodily engagements emerging from the contingency of the situation. As Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 142) argues, "[w]e cannot relate certain movements to bodily mechanisms and others to consciousness. The body and consciousness are not mutually limiting".

Hence, what we call reflexive acts are those of embodied beings and, as such, need to be contextualised within a specific contingency – they emerge out of, and are only possible within, a specific milieu. This latter claim, I wish to emphasise, does not preclude the agency of the subject, as these reflexive acts, which in turn are grounded in the body and then in the world, do make a difference within that contingency in which they are embedded – it could not be otherwise precisely because, rather than separate from the milieu they emerge from, they are part of it. In the words of Merleau-Ponty (1993: 124), "my moving body makes a difference in the visible world, being a part of it". In this way, the cogito unfolds from a corporeal, direct, and immediate connection to the world – i.e., by means of what Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962: 468, original emphasis) called "unspoken [or] tacit *cogito*". Here the tacit cogito constitutes the background for the cogito, or, put another way, the cogito is enveloped by the tacit cogito.

Of course, the above arguments do not preclude that cognition and affect, or mind and body, can be experienced as 'split' – i.e., as two different dimensions severed from each other. Indeed, experiencing mind and body as separate can take several forms (see Leder, 1990), not just those related to the experimental setting described by Massumi. As observed by Spinoza (1996/1994: 103, EIIIP59S), even mundane instances like uncontrollable laugher or trembling demonstrate that our body can be experienced as cut off from our mind. Different examples of mind/body phenomenological separation can be provided by several of our everyday actions, which can be carried out in 'autopilot' mode, in a manner which can actually allow our mind to wander off in its immaterial world of thought.

However, these mind/body split instances do not imply that a) our mind and body are two different entities, b) the fundamental unity of mind and body cannot be experienced by the embodied agent, and c) our conscious deliberations and reflexive capacities cannot tap into and shape the tacit knowledge of the body. For example, when driving a car, we can show an unexpected, fast, and effective response to a sudden obstacle on the road, and avoid an accident by means of a reaction which bypasses our conscious realisation of the occurrence itself. However, this can occur because we have learned to drive – i.e., we have shaped a pre-reflective level of knowledge and have

embodied the skill of driving – by also using our reflexive capacities. In fact, in this learning process we have shifted from an initial experience of mind/body split – where our mind was not coordinated with the movements of our body on the pedals, the gears, and steering wheel – to an instance of mind-body-world unity, where in fact we are able to become one with the car and the road itself, and can act in perfect attunement with the changes, even if sudden, occurring in the surrounding environment.

While issues related to addressing the tacit knowledge of the body and to instances of attunement or disattunement between mind and body will be dealt with in more depth when outlining the case study, at the moment it is relevant to note that affect theorists like Thrift and Massumi only consider the mind/body and cognition/affect split but never the mind-body and cognition-affect integration, nor the agentic power of our conscious awareness. And this appears to be very peculiar for theorists who clearly wish to address social change and are concerned with the emancipation of the embodied agent from oppressive incorporations of culture – as aptly suggested by feminist theorist Clare Hemmings (2005: 565), "affect might in fact be valuable precisely to the extent that it is not autonomous".

To conclude, many of the arguments advanced within the affective turn seem to be particularly helpful for the perspective of embodiment I am sketching with this study. That is, within a process-oriented ontology entailing matter endowed with an experiential dimension and agentic powers, the body is envisaged as caught between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, or, to employ Massumi's terms, the virtual and the actual. In turn, this conceptualisation hints at the dual character of the body and implies two different logics when theorising embodiment – i.e., an either/or binary logic concerning embodiment as a phenomenon possessing a structure, and a paradoxical non-linear logic able to capture the fundamental processual nature of embodiment.

Furthermore, affect theorists rightly point out that an approach to issues of power relations only based on language, discourse, and ideology is doomed to fail, or, at least, to be incomplete. What also needs to be addressed, and cannot be neglected, is the sphere of emergence, the foundations of

our subjectivity, which concerns the extra-discursive aspects of our lived experience, the space 'in-between' – that which Merleau-Ponty intended to tap into. It is here that the tensions between the pre-objective and objectified body are played out, and, therefore, the dynamism, vitalism, and potential of qualitative transformation of social actors are enacted. In turn, this proposition suggests an implicit engagement with phenomenological relationships – such as those constituted by mind and body, representational and non-representational, language and corporeality – which do not appear to be conceived of as fixed, but, rather, amenable to change.

Nevertheless, the turn to affect has also brought with it a number of problematics. First of all, there remains an inherent contradiction in these new materialist/affective perspectives, as while materiality and the body are thought to be alive, sentient, and 'more than matter', the phenomenological/immaterial dimensions of the embodied agent, and indeed the embodied agent as such, are still neglected. In this way, there is the reproduction of an exclusive focus on an external dimension of embodiment and the related neglect of its individuated character – an issue we have already encountered in previous strands of body studies.

Linked to this, rather than developing the insights of the corporeal turn and bringing together mind and body, and the immaterial and the material dimensions of embodiment, the affective turn ended up in an inverse Cartesian dualism where the body rather than the mind becomes the privileged term, and our phenomenological life is stripped by any causal power. This is evident when the just acknowledgment of the primacy of the affective is associated with the jettisoning of our conscious deliberations; or when there is an exclusive focus on instances where affect is able to bypass consciousness without considering the important question of how our reflexive capacities can address and shape affective patterns.

In this way, affect is mistakenly theorised as belonging to a separate realm, a transcendent dimension, which has nothing to do with discourse, ideology, and conscious awareness. In turn, this theorising leaves a gap between what appear to be irreconcilable worlds: cognition and affect, representational and non-representational, language and corporeality, indeed, mind and body. How

are they implicated? How do they interact? How can we conceptualise their relationship? It is in fact the aim of the present research to provide some answers to these questions and ameliorate this state of affairs.

Conclusion – The Persistence of the Cartesian Dualism(s)

Overall, I hope that my (inevitably selective) review of the last thirty years of body studies has highlighted some of the obstacles preventing further developments in the field. We have seen that a just critique of the Cartesian ontology and its dramatic divides between mind and body, subject and object, and experiencer and experienced has dominated contemporary sociological theories of the body. Yet, by asking to what extent the notion of embodiment has transcended the mind-body dualism, I have exposed the persistence of the Cartesian paradigm in the very theorising which aims at challenging it. That is, I have shown that Cartesianism seems to be imbued in the anti-Cartesian theorising of the authors reviewed here while, at the same time, the mind-body relationship is rarely mentioned or addressed, let alone explained.

As I have illustrated with exemplary impasses (e.g., Butler and Massumi), this state of affairs is reflected in the inability of body theorists to spell out in detail other and crucial relationships related to the mind-body's (e.g., those between language and corporeality, and the representational and non-representational), and thus leaves the field of body studies vexed by Cartesian gaps. Hence, despite their anti-Cartesian commitment, each of the main approaches to the body tends to *either* set mind and body in opposition by emphasising one of the two poles of the Cartesian dualism at the expense of the other (e.g., the linguistic and affective perspective), *or* deliberatively ignore the qualitative and analytical distinctions between the two (e.g., actor-network theory).

At the same time, while each approach appears to stress different features of embodiment, there seems to be an unproductive common ground shared by all the theoretical perspectives analysed here. That is, all the major theories of embodiment appear to share a unidirectional concern with the external environments of embodiment, while the inner/phenomenological dimension of the subject and her own emergent properties are neglected as irrelevant phenomena. Thus, the untenable transcendental, disembodied, and cognitivist knower of an external world appears to have been set aside at the cost of jettisoning the embodied agent and her lived experience.

Yet, I suggest that the 'sacrifice' of the embodied agent and her phenomenal world is not only unnecessary but in fact in contrast with one of the chief axioms of the anti-Cartesian/anti-cognitivist standpoint, that which entails that experiencing and knowing the world means changing it. Contrary to Descartes' contention, here we do not have a subject representing an 'external' world in her mind, but an embodied agent who acts in and experiences the world at the same time. Experiencing is doing, and knowing is an ongoing dynamic and transformative process equally involving the knower and the known. It is precisely because mind and body are not two separate entities inhabiting separate worlds, and because experience and knowledge emerge from the sustained engagement of the embodied agent with the wider context in which she is embedded that, rather than being epiphenomena, our sensations, feelings, affective states, and reflexive deliberations are inextricably linked to the changes occurring in our world.

Thus, reducing the body to the mind, the mind to the body, or conflating the two, can only result in a reductionist, 'flat', and one-dimensional account of the embodied agent which, I contend, is in stark contrast with the complexities, varieties, and nuances involved in the paradoxical, processual, and dual character of human embodiment. In this respect, as I am here endorsing a multidimensional perspective of embodiment entailing multiple ways of getting to know and acting in the world – all of which possess causal powers – I recognise that each of the influential approaches scrutinised in this thesis emphasises key aspects of our embodied condition. However, to avoid a distorted, reductionist, and certainly incomplete account of the nature of embodiment, extant perspectives need to be integrated and thus transcended, rather than taken on their own.

As advocates of the linguistic turn rightly assert, the human body cannot escape cultural signification. Our knowledge and experiences cannot be separated from the socio-linguistic practices in which they occur – they are generated by means of relations and interdependencies within a community of speaking subjects. Moreover, our reflexive capacities are mostly enacted in a symbolic domain – a significant feature of our phenomenological world that can be experienced as an immaterial dimension. Unveiling discursive configurations has proved to be an effective strategy for shedding light on, and thus yielding change in, the structure of the social system. Yet,

while it is inadvisable to separate language from matter, it is equally untenable to reduce everything to the symbolic dimension. Hence, we need to avoid the danger of an idealistic reductionism, where the knowledge of the world obtained through our body is not reliable, sensations are the mere product of our intellect, and discourse is thought of as the precondition through which matter is constituted.

On the other hand, as is especially stressed by both actor-network and affect theorists, our internal conversations and conscious deliberations do not take place inside our head in an undefinable place where our consciousness is located, but involve all our corporeality, and arise from the temporal and spatial co-assembly of multiplicities of material and semiotic conditions which certainly exceed the physical boundaries of our body. Acts of reflection and reflexivity are not those of a disembodied subject, but rather always contingent on/embedded in specific events, emerging from extra-discursive forces, processes, and dynamics of which we are not, and indeed can never be, fully aware.

Yet, we need to be careful of generating abstract, flat, and above all lifeless accounts, where everything can be reduced to entanglements, connections, and networks, as occurs with ANT. Indeed, while the symbolic realm and the material domain cannot be separated at the ontological level, these two dimensions of embodiment possess different properties and therefore should not be conflated with one another at the epistemological level. In addition, the stress on the pre-conditions of our experiences – i.e. the emphasis on the pre-individual, the pre-linguistic, and pre-cognitive – does not need to entail the abandonment of either the linguistic dimension, or the causal powers of the embodied agent's conscious awareness, as regrettably occurs with a number of affect theorists.

A focus on one dimension and its peculiar properties ought not to obscure the others. For instance, if it is true that, as affect theorists point out, our consciousness and the symbolic realm are a late arrival on the scene of our experiences, this, I believe, does not imply their redundancy. On the contrary, it is through these higher-order degrees of experience and the discursive dimension that

our body enacts novelty and creativity, and thus brings about change in the world. It is precisely by adding the symbolic domain, consciousness, and life itself to the picture that we can obtain a richer notion of materiality, which can exceed matter itself and account for our mind, feelings, imaginations, meanings, and thus all the qualitative differences of our phenomenological world. Conceptualising affect as separate from language and consciousness can only (re)produce an inverse Cartesian paradigm and, once again, set mind and body in opposition.

Furthermore, and crucially, with the corporeal theorists' efforts to bring together the objectified and pre-objective body, we started realising that the objectified and pre-objective aspects of embodiment not only seem to be associated with the phenomenological truths related to the mind-body relationship, but also reflect the very character of our condition as embodied beings. Especially in light of the arguments of Merleau-Ponty and then Massumi, embodiment began to take the shape of a chiasm between two dimensions. The first, the most fundamental, is a pre-individual dimension where the subject-object distinction is not salient, and, as such, is therefore ultimately unknowable. The second, instead, unfolds from the first by means of a process also involving the subject-object bifurcation and the emergence of our lived experience. On this ground, addressing and thus shaping the tacit knowledge of the body means tapping into the core of this unfolding process – i.e., into the emergence of our phenomenological life.

Therefore, as a mediator, an interface, or a transducer between two dimensions, embodiment appears to possess a dual character. To address this dual nature, I have highlighted the implicit arguments of Massumi, and suggested employing both a linear either/or level of analysis and a non-linear or paradoxical logic. The former can help us to capture the structural aspects of the body, as a differentiated and self-organised system. The latter appears necessary if we want to address the body as an open-ended, distributed, and processual phenomenon, which can only exist in relation to other bodies.

Yet, it seems important to reiterate that I am in no way advocating a further type of Cartesianism or a dualistic ontology, but rather pointing out the multiplicities involved in the ways we get to

know and act in the world. In fact, I believe that our embodied condition is far more complex than what can be accounted for by only recurring to two dimensions or two levels of analysis. In this respect, I am endorsing an approach that is epistemologically pluralist and ontologically monist, rather than Cartesian and dualist. In other words, the pre-individual and individuated dimensions of embodiment I am referring to here – which from now on I will identify as the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment of the *Becoming* and the dichotomous mode of the *Being* respectively – only represent a point of departure from which to explore the multidimensionality of our embodied condition and move into post-Cartesian territories. Having said that, before embarking on this exploratory journey with the present research's case study, below I outline the methodology employed in my endeavour in the second part of this thesis.

Part II: METHODOLOGY – ENVELOPING DUALISM(S)

Introduction – Study's Rationale, Aims, Conceptual Strategy, and Methods

It would indeed be foolish to embark on the exploration of novel and unknown territories without some sort of preparation involving, for example, maps, strategies, and a careful choice of equipment. Yes, it is true that it is not known exactly what one will encounter, but, as will be evident below, other explorers adventured on very similar non-dualist routes (e.g., Spinoza, Nishida, the Daoist tradition) – what do their accounts look like? How can their experiences help? And, of course, there must be some level of expectation if one decides to travel – what does one wish to gain from the journey? Part II of this thesis – the methodology – intends to answer these questions. In the subsequent chapters 5 and 6, I elucidate the present study's rationale, aims, conceptual strategy, and methods.

I begin by outlining the research's rationale and aims in chapter 5. Here I suggest that it is only by confronting the mind-body relationship that we can address the deeply ingrained habits constituting the background of our embodied actions, experiences, and identities. I subsequently identify Shilling's body pedagogics as a fruitful example of an approach aiming at bringing together the insights of different perspectives of the sociological study of the body. However, I argue that a meaningful integration of the different strands in the field would require a paradigmatic shift when theorising embodiment. That is, I suggest that, if we wish to move in post-Cartesian territories, rather than integrating them, we need to aim at transcending extant approaches in a manner which can allow us to endorse a process-oriented ontology while also accounting for the causal powers of an individuated dimension.

Following this, I introduce the conceptual strategy I employ in my exploration: namely that of enveloping all dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context and thus turning them into dualities in unity. Stemming from my initial distinction between mistaken ontological conclusions and evident epistemological truths related to the mind-body relationship, this strategy involves an explicit

acknowledgment of the dual character of embodiment, as well as of two related modes according to which we get to know and engage with the world. One is a dichotomous mode of embodiment where the mind-body dualism is phenomenologically salient – I call this mode the Being, which is sustained by an either/or logic. The other is a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment where the mind-body dualism vanishes from one's phenomenological field and mind and body are experienced in their ontological unity – I call this mode the Becoming, which is underpinned by a paradoxical logic.

I furthermore introduce the two self-cultivation practices which compose this thesis' case study: Daoist Internal Arts (DIA) and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP). I employ the latter as a theoretical lens to analyse the former, which I am using as an ethnographic empirical arena. Both practices employ the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) to bring about a radical shift from the dichotomous Being to the non-dichotomous Becoming.

After this introductory account, I illustrate in what ways the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) is especially significant in Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō's basho theory. Here I show that, rather than bridging the dualist gap, Nishida overwhelms it with a wider non-dualist context. He engages with dualities without either conflating their terms or falling into dualism(s), and is therefore able to account for the causal powers of an individuated dimension within a process-oriented ontology. In turn, Nishida's basho theory leads to an overview of Daoist cosmology and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which theoretically inform DIA.

And it is with DIA that I begin chapter 6. Here I explain that I use this umbrella term to encompass a variety of overlapping practices such as neigong, qigong, and tai chi chuan. In this respect it is important to make clear that the present research is not concerned with DIA *per se*, i.e., as an object of study. Rather, this Eastern tradition, which I investigate in a Western context, is employed as a pragmatic exemplification of a practice concerned with bringing about change in human embodiment from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode. Accordingly, the outcome

of the case study is discussed within the context of contemporary body studies and with the support of Western thinkers, rather than in relation to Eastern philosophies and in Daoist terms.

I subsequently turn my attention to the epistemological issues involved in the present study, whose aim also includes a contribution to expanding the notion of the empirical in sociological and embodied research. Here I explain that this thesis endorses a phenomenological approach which aims to 'walk the line' between the mode of embodiment of the Being and the Becoming – i.e., to take into account both modes and the two related logics. Linked to this I outline the methods employed, which intend to address the multidimensionality of embodiment, the tacit knowledge of the body, and the dynamics involved in the relationship between pre-reflective and reflective experiential dimensions. I then present an account of the research's background, qualify the data in quantitative terms, and provide a short conclusion.

Chapter 5: TRANSCENDING DUALISM(S)

5.1 Study Rationale – Accounting for Individuation Within a Process-Oriented Ontology

When reviewing extant literature, I have argued that although the field of body studies emerged from a strong anti-Cartesian stance, we have nevertheless witnessed shifts of emphasis along the terms of the Cartesian dualism. That is, rather than having been meaningfully related to one another in a non-dualist manner, mind and body appear to have been set in opposition or conflated. In other words, my analysis of three decades of body studies has indicated that a just anti-Cartesian commitment has not yet developed into a truly and consolidated post-Cartesian scenario. In fact, rather than turns, it seems that in the field we have witnessed re-turns of long-standing philosophical questions, which fundamentally boil down to the nature of the relationship between our mind and body.

On this ground, rather than 'solving' what are ultimate questions, I wish to provide a contribution to understanding the character of, and the dynamics involved in, the mind-body relationship, so that we can more effectively 'deal' with it and thus overcome the persistence of a Cartesian and dualistic way of thinking. My contention is that only by addressing the mind-body relationship in a direct manner can we transcend extant approaches to the body, advance our understanding of other related crucial relationships still salient in social theory (e.g., those between language and corporeality, the representational and non-representational, and internal and external environments of embodiment), and be able to stick to a process-oriented and relational ontology while not neglecting the causal powers of the embodied agent's emergent properties.

I am here concerned with change. And, as I share the view of those numerous social and cultural theorists who see embodiment as the locus where the reproduction and the transformation of society and culture takes place, a concern with change also means addressing the pre-reflective aspects of our embodied condition – that which Merleau-Ponty calls the tacit knowledge of the body: i.e., deeply ingrained habits, sedimented in the very materiality, anatomy, and physiology of

the body, which constitute the background of our conscious awareness and capacities for reflexivity.

In fact, this concern too is a long-standing preoccupation, which is shared by two apparently distant – in both space and time – perspectives: that of a Western and enlightenment philosopher such as Spinoza, and that of an Eastern and ancient tradition such as Daoism. Understanding pre-reflective/reflective dynamics is crucial to bring about change in modes of embodiment, which, regardless of geographical and historical contexts, shaped by material, social, and cultural environments, can enhance or constrain the way we get to know and act in the world.

As highlighted by Shilling (2017: 12), "[t]he power relationships implicated in who is able to direct consciously the pre-conscious cultural learning of others is an important sociological issue". In sociological terms, the concern with the interaction between reflective and pre-reflective types of knowledge is perhaps best exemplified by debates on the relationship between Bourdieu's notion of habitus and our reflexive capacities. In fact, the habitus is a further long-standing theme. A notion which can be traced back to Aristotle and subsequently to the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas, Bourdieu's habitus constitutes the basis of our subjectivity and being-in-the-world (Crossley, 2001). The habitus shapes the way we think, judge, and act in social environments, which therefore also involves our outlook, tastes, desires, and the way we talk, walk, or sit (Bourdieu 2014/1990).

In Bourdieu's words (ibid.: 53, original emphasis), habitus are "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations". Stressing therefore more the pre-reflective and the non-representational (and the body) rather than the reflective and the representational (and the mind), as well as the symmetry between embodied dispositions and social structures (rather than the emergent properties and creative capacities of the embodied agent), the habitus is a form of tacit knowledge, which comes to suffuse the body through socialisation, reiteration of sociocultural practices, and the material and symbolic contingencies available to the individual.

95

Yet, although it does shape them, the notion of the habitus does not seem to provide a satisfactory theoretical account of our cognitive capacities and conscious awareness (Shilling, 2004). In fact, always attuned with its 'habitat' – i.e., the location of the subject in a field of social relations (Sayer, 2005) – the habitus appears to be closely related to the notion of affect (Blackman, 2013; Lane, 2012). Consequently, habitus-related debates are animated by questions very much resembling those we encountered in the affective turn: Is the tacit knowledge of the habitus impermeable to our conscious deliberations? Are our actions mainly guided by our conscious deliberations or by the corporeal sedimentation of social practices? Can we reduce the embodied agent to her dispositions and the social structures in which she is embedded? While some attribute the key role in guiding our actions to reflexivity (e.g., Archer, 2007, 2010; Giddens, 2004/1991), most theorists see both habitus and reflexivity as being necessary for enabling embodied agents to make choices and competently navigate socio-cultural environments (e.g., Crossley, 2001; Mouzelis, 2008; Sayer, 2010; Shilling, 2012/1993, 2005).

However, if we do not adequately conceptualise the relationship between the two concepts – habitus and reflexivity – we risk ending up in a vicious circular process where society, the habitus, and our cognitive faculties are always symmetrical. In this way, there is no room for agency, creativity, and novelty, and our conscious awareness is once more reduced to an epiphenomenon. Conversely, an over-emphasis on our conscious deliberation is likely to yield disembodied accounts where, once again, there is a transcendent and active mind acting upon an objectified and passive body. We risk, in other words, continuing to reproduce *either* a sterile monism where two dimensions of embodiment are conflated, *or* an improbable dualism with an unbridgeable gap between two different types of knowledge. While, when theorising the habitus, Bourdieu himself and many more after him have acknowledged the role of reflexivity in our course of actions (for an exemplary publication in this respect, see Wacquant, 2014), as argued by Shilling (2004: 489), this has been done by resorting to "'residual categories' […] which could not be deduced from (and neither were they integrated into) the primary elements of Bourdieu's sociology".

Moreover, the notion of the habitus and the concern with the pre-reflective/reflective dynamics also brings to the fore other relationships, such as those between internal and external, outer and inner, and relational and individuated dimensions of embodiment. Despite the at-times dramatic divergences between extant approaches to the body, we have seen that the shared anti-Cartesian stance has produced what I argue is an unnecessary common ground constituted by an aversion to considering the embodied agent's inner life[7] and an exclusive focus on external environments of embodiment. As observed by Shilling (2007: 8-9), in contemporary social theory, although "embodiment [is] significant [it is] only analysed in terms of its ties and interdependence with other phenomena". And this trend is reflected also by the sociological employment of the habitus. Again in Shilling's (2008: 3, original emphasis) words:

> [Bourdieu's] conception of *habitus* places the reproduction of the external environment at the very heart of his conception of action [and therefore] the problem with this is that embodied action appears predetermined – it both echoes and replicates existing structures – leaving those who operationalise Bourdieu's work in their research employing strategies to modify its reproductive logic.

Similar to the inverse Cartesianism characterising some theorising on affect, here the pre-reflective and socially structured bodily knowledge of the habitus appears to pre-determine our course of action leaving in this way little room for innovation – here, once again, our conscious awareness only plays a marginal epiphenomenal role. A fruitful path leading to the amelioration of this state of affairs is indicated by Shilling (ibid.), who suggests re-evaluating the insights of American pragmatists such as John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and William James to advance our understanding of the relationship between social practices, bodily changes, and embodied actions. For Shilling, while acknowledging the ontological primacy of a collective, relational, and open-

---

[7] It appears to be helpful to make clear that I am here referring to Merleau-Ponty's conception of our lived experience as an opening, rather than closing, onto the world. Therefore, by 'inner life' I am not referring to an experience occurring somewhere 'inside' the embodied subject, as within a cognitivist/representationalist framework. Rather I mean the fact that we experience a world, a body, affective states, thoughts, inner conversations; the fact that we are conscious and have a sense of self, which has an exclusively personal character and is inaccessible to other people, but which nevertheless is part of the wider milieu constituted by our body embedded in material, social, and cultural worlds. That said, my conceptualisation of an inner dimension as an opening will become more evident in part III of this thesis dedicated to the case study.

ended dimension, pragmatists did not disregard the internal environment of human embodiment, an individuated dimension, and the embodied agent's conscious deliberations, which are irreducible to the social context – here the internal and external dimensions are always considered in conjunction, yet they are not conflated.

In this respect, when commenting on Dewey's theorising, Shilling (ibid.: 9, original emphasis) notes:

> The external environment (in its social and physical dimensions) is for pragmatism essential for understanding embodied action. The generalised standards that develop with regards to communicative acts, for example, affect our appearance, diet and action, while the social shaping of people's identities does not occur 'in a void' but through 'prolonged and cumulative interactions' with the peculiarities of their physical environment. Similarly, the body's schema, postures, muscle tensions, techniques and textures also develop as a result of us 'bumping into' and undertaking navigations through our physical milieu. Having recognised the significance of the external environment, however, pragmatism is also concerned with the *internal environment* of bodily being, and acknowledges the importance of the body's emergent needs and potentialities.

Hence, for Shilling (ibid.), addressing both the internal and external dimensions of embodiment, as has been done by pragmatists, means to grant to the pre-reflective, the social, and our habits the role of background for our embodied actions, but also acknowledge that our individuated dimension – involving our physical necessities (e.g., need for water, food, shelter, etc.) and mental capacities (e.g., the ability to reflect and act upon the milieu of which we are part) – brings about change in the collective dimension in which it is embedded. In other words, pragmatism "is sensitive to continuity *and* change" (Shilling, 2004: 479, original emphasis), or, in this thesis' terms, to structural *and* processual aspects of embodiment.

To be sure, accounting for what I have called the individuated dimension of embodiment – and thus the emergent properties of the embodied agent and her capacities to bring about novelty – ought not to be misinterpreted as an individualistic, cognitivist or indeed Cartesian standpoint. While this dimension will be discussed in detail in the case study, it is important to reiterate that

the fundamental tenet of this thesis is the acknowledgement that we live in a world of entanglement, interconnectedness, and mutual implication, where there is no place for self-contained, independent, and transcendent entities – as previously stated (see chapter 4.1), the present research subscribes to what is fundamentally a process-oriented ontology.

Every 'thing', including our bodies and minds, does not pre-exist its relation with other things but rather comes to be through such relation – every 'thing' can *be* because it is related to another 'thing'. Yet, the appreciation that things have an identity not because of a substantial principle internal to them but because they are embedded in a wider collective milieu does not need to imply that such things ought to be ignored as irrelevant. Indeed, a 'thing' is an emergent phenomenon which makes a difference precisely because it is related to other 'things'.

Therefore, while the disregard of the individuated dimension is understandable in light of the preoccupation of social and cultural theorists with avoiding the cognitivist and disembodied accounts which have for too long dominated social theory, if we want to avoid erasing the subject altogether and an inverse Cartesianism where our phenomenological life becomes an epiphenomenon, rather than disregarding it, we need to re-think an individuated dimension in a non-transcendent, non-Cartesian, and non-epiphenomenal fashion. In other words, we need to be able to address both internal and external environments of embodiment in a non-dualist manner. It is in light of these considerations that I suggest that a productive task for contemporary social theory is *to account for an individuated dimension possessing its own phenomenal world, power of acting, and emergent properties within a non-dualist, relational, and process-oriented ontology.* It is in this direction that the present study intends to go.

Hence, far from advocating a Cartesian worldview, I am attempting to move from a mere anti-Cartesian stance towards what political theorists Diane Coole and Samantha Frost (2010) envisage as a post-Cartesian ontology. The former has been a necessary starting point; the latter, I contend, is needed to move on from a certain impasse in contemporary body studies. The just objection to the Cartesian paradigm has enormously advanced the understanding of our embodied subjectivity,

and has successfully challenged the self-contained, rational, transcendent knower who finds herself somehow parachuted into an external world. Yet, as aptly put by Stenner (2008: 93), "[i]n recent 'radical' social theory, it seems the baby of subjectivity is at risk of being thrown out with the bathwater of representationalism, leaving only the hollow remainder of a reactive ensemble of 'body parts'".

All in all, while in social theory the mind-body dualism appears to underpin a series of crucial issues, at the same time in contemporary theorising the nature of the relationship between mind and body seems to be more avoided than discussed, more forgotten than confronted, more vilified than re-considered. In this way, it seems as if the issue has already been settled by simply acknowledging the untenability of the Cartesian worldview. However, as rightly contended by Grosz (see chapter 3.3), moving beyond the mind-body dualism does not mean denying it. Choosing reductionist shortcuts, such as those of reducing the mind to the body, the body to the mind, or sterile forms of monism, means more explaining the Cartesian dualism away than advancing the understanding of our embodied condition. As suggested by Shilling, rather than eschewing "theoretical concerns [and only providing] partial views of embodiment" (2012/1993: 209), "[t]he sociology of the body needs to say something about the mind-body relationship" (ibid.: 16) – in this respect, below I will show that indeed Shilling offers a number of useful arguments.

5.2 Study Aims – Transcending Extant Approaches

Shilling (2012/1993) points out that the tendency of body theorists to stress certain features of the body while neglecting others, rather than combining them into a coherent conceptual framework, seems to result in a stalemate of the sociology of the body. In fact, authors who concentrate their efforts on accommodating different perspectives in one coherent framework of the body seem to be rare. By pointing out that little progress has been made in the last two decades in theorising the body, Shilling (ibid.: 249) argues that "we have reached a point where theoretical consolidation is

needed" and suggests that a "way of proceeding is to incorporate the most useful features of the approaches we have examined into a more comprehensive framework that avoids their limitations". Working towards this project of integration, Shilling conceptualises modes of embodiment as the outcome of particular *body pedagogics*. In Shilling and Mellor's (2007: 533, original emphasis) words:

> [B]ody pedagogics refers to the central *means* through which a culture seeks to transmit its main corporeal techniques, skills, dispositions and beliefs, the *experiences* typically associated with acquiring these attributes, and the actual *embodied changes* resulting from this process.

In this way, the body pedagogics approach is multidimensional as it takes into account the material, social and cultural connotations of modes of embodiment, and, even more importantly for this thesis' concern with our phenomenological life, the experiences related to specific changes in modes of embodiment. Here the biological and the social are more than the mere sum of their parts, and human embodiment is a complex phenomenon which needs to be addressed as "*as a whole* (body and mind, feeling and cognition)" (Mellor & Shilling, 2014: 3). At the same time, as Shilling and Mellor (2007: 533) make clear, considering embodiment as a whole does not necessarily entail a one-dimensional form of monism as all the aspects involved – the material, the sensual, the experiential, the cognitive, the symbolic – are "analytically significant each in its own right [so that] the concept of body pedagogics can facilitate analyses which explore how these factors interact and shape each other without engaging in discursive reductionism or other forms of conflationism".

A body pedagogics approach, in other words, avoids conflation by retaining analytical distinctions between different dimensions of embodiment without, however, falling into forms of dualism. Distinctions can be made, for instance, between bodies and social systems, or different types of experiences and ways of acting – each with their own properties, which cannot be reduced to each other. This appears evident when Shilling stresses the need to acknowledge "different levels and 'depths' of cultural transmission and learning" (2017: 12), and analytically distinguishes "between

cognition, practical and sensory knowledge" (ibid.: 11) or "between noetic/conscious and anoetic/pre-conscious knowledge" (ibid.: 12).

Crucially, not only are all these analytical categories and levels of analysis not conflated, but they are also not set apart or in opposition. Differently from Massumi (see chapter 4.3), Shilling (2017: 18) recognises that the tacit knowledge of the body can be *both* sealed from, *and* aligned with, our conscious awareness. Here the relationship between mind and body and/or between different types of knowledge, rather than being fixed, is amenable to change. Again drawing on the pragmatist approach, Shilling (ibid.: 10) reminds us that "Dewey is clear that thinking and sensing, noetic and anoetic knowledge, can complement each other, but can also be uneven and compartmentalized".

Hence, every culturally structured activity (e.g., occupational, religious, or sporting practices) to be successfully performed requires the meaningful convergence of different types of embodied knowledge. Moreover, the embodied agent's noetic and anoetic forms of knowledge also need to be attuned with external material and semiotic environments. Conversely, a fracture between pre-reflective and reflective dimensions or between internal and external environments of embodiment poses serious challenges to the effectiveness of the embodied agent's action within a specific cultural practice. Indeed, the success of a cultural practice involves the alignment of all the dimensions taken into account by body pedagogics: i.e., "[the] social, technological and material *means* through which cultural practices are transmitted, the varied *experiences* of those involved in this learning and the embodied *outcomes* of these processes" (Shilling, ibid.: 2, original emphasis). It is only with such mind-body-world alignment in place that a cultural practice can be successfully carried out.

It is, again, in this way that we can retain analytical distinctions while at the same time avoiding a dualist stance. All the dimensions considered, rather than irremediably cut off, are ultimately related to one another in dynamic relationships where they can be more or less attuned. For instance, while language can abstract us from our corporeality, it can also tap into it. In reference to a study conducted by Potter on contemporary dance training, Shilling (ibid.: 6) notes that:

> [C]ontemporary dance teachers employ verbal communication to stimulate particular experiences. Phrases including 'melt into the floor', 'feel the weight of the head' and 'anchor the [heavy] pelvis into the ground' prompt dancers to re-centre on the 'body's relationship with gravity'.

Therefore, in this particular instance, rather than stressing a gap between affect and discourse, Shilling (ibid.: 6, original emphasis) emphasises the "*affective weight* of concepts and symbols". It is on the ground of all the above that the body pedagogics approach appears to offer a fertile sociological terrain on which to develop a view of embodiment which can account for its dual and multidimensional character.

In addition, and significantly for this thesis, the need to theorise thought and cognition in body studies in both a non-epiphenomenal and non-dualistic way is identified by Shilling (ibid.) as the current priority in the body pedagogics agenda. He notes that the role of thought and cognition in the incorporation of culture and in the shaping of particular modes of embodiment is only implicitly acknowledged in the majority of studies concerned with the embodied transmission and acquisition of cultural practices. Hence, as this role appears to be undeveloped at the theoretical level, more research is needed to fill this gap (ibid.).

Indeed, I believe that it is precisely by being able to theorise cognition as not opposed to the body's tacit knowledge that we can move toward a post-Cartesian worldview. Furthermore, in agreement with the outcome of my literature review showing the tendency to neglect of the inner dimension of the embodied agent, I would suggest re-thinking not only the role of cognition and thought, but of our lived experience as a whole, whose immaterial features can be mistakenly considered as less 'actual' than the material registers of our embodied condition.

All in all, it seems to be clear that despite their limitations, each of the influential approaches to the body reviewed by the present research emphasises crucial aspects of the multidimensional phenomenon of embodiment. That is, the symbolic, the corporeal, the pre-reflective, and the fields of relations and possibilities from which the embodied subject emerges, are all facets that cannot be left unaddressed when theorising and researching the body and its relation to society and

culture. However, as argued by Shilling (2005: 5), "[w]ithin each of these analyses, the spotlight rests on certain aspects of the body, leaving others obscured". And in fact, as I have contended, these analyses still appear to be located in a Cartesian landscape.

It is in this respect that I contend that, rather than simply putting together their most valuable insights, there is a need for a type of integration able to transcend extant approaches. That is, I believe that a true integration can only be achieved by a paradigmatic shift in the way we think of human embodiment – i.e., from a Cartesian to a post-Cartesian perspective. It is therefore in light of all these arguments that the present research intends to provide a contribution towards an approach to theorising and researching embodiment which can:

1. Transcend extant linguistic, corporeal, and affective approaches in body studies.

2. Engage with the analytical distinction related to the different experiential dimensions of embodiment – e.g., mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, representational and non-representational forms of knowledge – without conflating or setting these in opposition.

3. Advance our understanding of how the relationships between these different experiential dimensions come to be and change.

4. Retain a fundamentally process-oriented, open-ended, and relational framework, while accounting for the causal powers of our phenomenological life and individuated dimension.

But how can such a contribution be provided? In what follows, I will first introduce the conceptual strategy I intend to employ with the help of Nishida's basho theory, and then progress to outline the empirical arena of the case study and the methods employed.

5.3 The Conceptual Strategy – Enveloping Dualism(s)

As suggested at the beginning of this thesis, a fruitful starting point to address the Cartesian paradigm is that of making a distinction *between* the Cartesian ontological claim of mind and body belonging to two different realms *and* the basic epistemological distinction between material and immaterial experiences. That is, a distinction between the qualitative differences characterising our phenomenological life at the epistemological level and their reification at the ontological level. In turn, it is this distinction which can allow us to embrace an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist theoretical framework. As argued by Williams and Bendelow (1998: 3, original emphasis), this also means making a distinction between 'dual*ity* and dual*ism*' – a distinction which is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's equation PLURALISM = MONISM (see chapter 4.2):

> 'Destabilising' oppositional categories in this way does not, however, mean that we can dispense with them altogether. Rather, their analytical potential must be acknowledged and engaged with, so that the new terms and different conceptual framework can be found in order to 'step outside' these traditional binary divisions and debates […] *Embodiment*, we suggest, a term which lies ambiguously across the nature/culture divide, provides just a means of doing so […] Ultimately, however, as we readily acknowledge, there is no 'single' or 'final', solution of this knotty (philosophical) problem: even the idea of 'going beyond' the binary divide sets up its own duality (i.e. dichotomous versus non-dichotomous modes of thought). It is this central paradox, and the opportunities and constraints it affords, which fascinates us.

Nevertheless, while on the one hand employing dualities does necessarily entail a commitment to dualism, on the other, dualities and dualism(s) are separated by a very fine line. As Williams and Bendelow note, the danger here is to set up further dualisms, such as that between a dichotomous and a non-dichotomous mode of thought. Yet, there is a conceptual strategy that has been long employed across Western and Eastern traditions to walk this fine line which, rather than providing a 'single or final solution of this knotty (philosophical) problem', might help us deal with our

problem – it can, in other words, help achieve our aim of theorising and researching embodiment without neither conflating nor setting in opposition mind and body.

Such a strategy consists of emplacing, grounding, or enveloping dualism(s) – including that between mind and body – in a wider non-dichotomous context. Here dualist gaps – including the dichotomous/non-dichotomous – rather than bridged, are overwhelmed by a greater framework and, in this way, from dualism(s) they turn into dualities in unity. Likely due to the concern with avoiding Descartes' spectre, or, instead, perhaps due to the subtle persistence of his paradigm, this way of (re)conceptualising dualism(s) has never been developed in the rather consistent bulk of literature constituting body studies. However, it is this strategy that the present research intends to explore by bringing to the fore the dual character of embodiment that has implicitly emerged from reviewing extant literature, and relate it to two different ways to get to know and engage with the world, which I call the Being and the Becoming.

The Being is a dichotomous mode of embodiment, where one tends to experience the world according to an either/or linear logic, as a structure made up by individuated and separated entities, and where dualisms like mind and body, subject and object, internal and external, or you and I, are phenomenologically salient. The Becoming is a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment where one experiences the world according to a circular logic of paradox, as a changing, evolving, open-ended event, where there is no distinction between mind and body, subject and object, internal and external, you and I – i.e., here dualism(s) tend to disappear from the phenomenological field and are experienced as dualities in unity.

In support of my endeavour, I will not only draw on the extant discursive, corporeal, and affect theories reviewed in this study, but also on a number of sources from the natural sciences (e.g., Maturana and Varela, 1980/1972, 1992/1987; McGilchrist, 2010/2009). Indeed, the need to overcome the suspicion with which social sciences traditionally regard biological and neuroscientific approaches to the body has been stressed by several scholars (e.g., Blackman & Venn, 2010; Cromby, Newton & Williams, 2011; Fraser & Greco, 2005; Weber, 2006). In

addition, I will re-engage with a number of philosophers who have been increasingly acquiring currency in contemporary body studies (e.g., James, 1996/1912; Simondon, 1992, 2006/2001; Whitehead, 1968/1938, 1985/1978). However, all these sources will be located in the non-dualist landscape provided by two self-cultivation practices.

One is offered by one of the first and most eminent anti-Cartesians: Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP), which will therefore constitute the theoretical structure of my sketch of a re-conceptualisation of embodiment. As such, Spinoza's view of human embodiment and of the relationship between mind and body will be discussed in detail in the case study section. At the moment it suffices to say that in his major work, the *Ethics*, Spinoza (1996/1994) advances a self-cultivation practice aiming at accessing the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment I call the Becoming. As observed by Foucault (2005: 15, see also Deleuze, 2013/1992), Spinoza aims to provide his readers with the instruments to achieve non-dichotomous modes of embodied knowledge, action, and identity where dualism(s) vanish(es) and the subject "must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself".

In fact, this is also the aim of the other self-cultivation practice, that which will constitute the empirical arena where the strategy of turning dualism(s) into dualities in unity will be 'tested'. That is, at the empirical level I will employ an ethnographic case study of Eastern self-cultivation practices now also popular in Western countries: neigong, qigong, and tai chi chuan. I will refer to these as Daoist Internal Arts (DIA). Having roots in the Daoist tradition which employs dualities in unity rather than dualism(s), DIA involve a type of training which targets the tacit knowledge of the body to obtain a radical transformation of the entire person – body and mind. In fact, the DIA practitioner's aim is to actually embody dualities rather than dualism(s) – again, to achieve a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment.

By identifying these Eastern practices as a promising empirical ground, I am also being sensitive to the calls of many authors at a transdisciplinary level (e.g., Barad, 2007; Grosz, 1994; Lefebvre, 2013/2004; Varela et al., 1993/1991) who have pointed out that, as both natural and human

sciences seem to be dominated by Western/Cartesian thought, we would benefit from a serious re-evaluation of non-Western traditions in the production of knowledge.

However, before providing more information on DIA and the related Daoist tradition, I wish to dwell a little more on the pivotal conceptual strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context. While this strategy is adopted by both the self-cultivation practices used by the present research, it seems to be especially significant in the approach to the body advanced by Nishida. In addition, aiming to integrate the two perspectives, Nishida is a philosopher who engages with both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, and can therefore help us to safely consolidate the common ground I identify between DIA and SPP. It is for these two main reasons that below I will provide an overview of a key notion in Nishida's philosophy: basho.

5.4 Basho – Overwhelming the Gap

Nishida's works are underpinned by a motivation which is very much consistent with the present research's: he intended to account for the mind-body relationship and an individuated dimension within an open-ended, relational, and process-oriented ontology. As noted by philosopher James Heisig (2001: 43), Nishida intended "to show both the unity of individual consciousness and its participation in an unfolding process beyond individual consciousness". In this way, Nishida employs an ontologically monist and yet epistemologically pluralist theoretical framework. Determined to avoid flat/conflated/one-dimensional forms of monism (à la ANT, for instance), Nishida (1966/1958: 163) argues that:

> [W]hen things are thought as parts of the whole, it means that the concept of acting things is lost, that the world becomes static and that reality is lost. The world of reality is essentially the one as well as the many; it is essentially a world of the mutual determination of single beings.

To pursue his goal of stepping outside dualism(s) but not jettisoning dualities and analytical distinctions, Nishida integrated Western (especially Kantian, Jamesian, and phenomenological traditions) and Eastern perspectives (including Daoist, Zen Buddhist, and Indian thought)

(Krummel, 2012). In this light, he becomes particularly helpful in identifying the common ground between the Western philosophers the current study draws on and the Eastern tradition constituting the empirical arena.

Resonating with Merleau-Ponty's theorising, Nishida's (1966/1958) body functions as an interface between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, and, as such, possesses a dual character. In fact, for Nishida the world we experience is "a *chiasma* – i.e., a cross-configuration or intersection – of multilevels or dimensions" (Krummel, 2012: 42, original emphasis). In this way, for Nishida the relationship between the embodied agent and the world is characterised by creative interpenetration and structural reciprocity – the embodied agent makes the world and, simultaneously, is made by it. For Nishida (1966/1958: 199) "[w]e have our body in and with the formed; i.e., we are historical-bodily". Here the body constitutes, and it is constituted by, the material, social, and cultural milieu in which it is located, and therefore for Nishida embodiment is a multidimensional phenomenon which is more than the mere sum of biological and cultural factors. As philosopher Joel Krueger (2008: 221) explains:

> [For Nishida] our body is always embedded in shifting biological and cultural contexts that both sustain and constrain our activities, as well as giving them meaning and significance. Moreover, the different forms of our worldly engagement become the vehicles by which we achieve embodiment in all its dimensions.

Yet, while Nishida's philosophy shows a consistency with the arguments of many of the authors employed by this study (i.e., Merleau-Ponty, Spinoza, James, Simondon, and Whitehead), the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) – what the Japanese philosopher calls a theory of basho – plays the crucial role in his project of theorising the causal powers of an individuated dimension within a process-oriented ontology. But what is basho? As explained by philosopher John Krummel (2012: 5-6), basho ('place' in Japanese) is "the 'placedness' or 'implacement' of our lived experience in the whole of its dynamic structure, that grounds cognition and whence the bifurcation into subject-object derives". In the words of Yuasa (1987: 57), if all objects and things need to occupy a space, "basho is the ground which supports all things existing in space".

In this way, Nishida's theory of basho advances in an especially explicit fashion what we will later see constituting a common ground shared by a number of diverse perspectives – i.e., relationships like those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, or representational and non-representational, are conceptualised as dynamic dualities amenable to change and always located within a wider and ultimately non-dualist context. In turn, this allows basho to accommodate the structure of a particular phenomenon within a processual perspective which also accounts for the emergent properties of an individuated dimension.

Starting from the premise that the asymmetrical coexistence between the body and the world grounds the possibility of embodied experience and action, Nishida (2012) appears to be interested in mapping out how exactly the phenomenon of human embodiment emerges from its emplacement in the world. While this concern might resonate with that of some actor-network theorists, it greatly differs from it. That is, Nishida does not exclusively focus on an open-ended dimension at the expense of an individuated one. Rather, albeit considering the former the ground of the latter, he is concerned with both these dimensions, which in his philosophy need to be considered in conjunction – once more, we are here reasoning in terms of dualities in unity.

If for Nishida our lived experience *is* the distinction between two dimensions, one unfolding from the other, this also implies that it needs to involve both of them. Ultimately, with his theory of basho, Nishida intends to develop a sophisticated tool to analyse the ways we get to know and act in the world in great detail, and achieve a non-dichotomous form of embodiment – what he calls action-intuition (the Becoming, in this thesis' terms). Here there is no absence of consciousness but rather another type of consciousness, an awareness of, or *in*, the action itself. In these instances, as observed by Varela (1999: 34), "[w]hen one is the action, no residue of self-consciousness remains to observe the action externally".

Basho (place) is therefore important because, for Nishida, the dynamic coupling between the body and the world raises the question of what kind of work is performed by the body in relation to the

whole, or, what place the activity of the embodied agent has in relation to the historical-social world (Krummel, 2012). To answer this question, basho theory employs multiple registers, levels, or degrees of analysis (in a manner very similar to TCM, which I will illustrate shortly). That is, Nishida (2012) employs different 'bashos', which constitute a structuring of emplacement which envelops, surrounds, encloses, and grounds an increasingly more restricted structure of relationships – including that between mind and body. However, these different degrees of analysis are not hierarchical but rather co-dependent with one another in their mutual interactions within a monist ontological system (ibid.).

In this way, always with an emphasis on her agency and capacities for acting upon the world with reflexive and creative abilities, for Nishida the embodied agent is at the same time dependent, independent, and interdependent (Krummel, 2012). For example, the embodied agent is dependent on the world as its expression but also independent in her creativity and capacities for reflexivity and acting upon the world (ibid.). At the same, time embodied agents are also interdependent with one another through their interactions, which, in turn, resonate on more enveloping (for instance, society and culture) or more restricted structures (for example, the individual's mind-body relationship) (ibid.).

I believe that Krummel (2012: 29, original emphasis) beautifully sums up the Japanese philosopher's approach to the mind-body dualism when he says that "[r]ather than erecting a bridge to cross over the dualistic gap, Nishida's *basho*-theory thus points us to a greater sea that overwhelms the gap". In this way basho can help us to retain a process-oriented ontology while not jettisoning useful analytical distinctions. Or, once again, basho theory offers a theorising which can allow us to endorse monism at the ontological level while accounting for pluralism at the epistemological level. In fact, such an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist framework, along with the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context and thus turning them into dualities in unity, characterise Daoist philosophy and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). As these two intertwined traditions underpin DIA practices, below I will provide an essential overview of their principles.

5.5 Daoist Cosmology and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Perhaps the principles of Daoist philosophy and TCM are best represented by the famous Taijitu diagram, which symbolises the universal forces giving rise to all differences and phenomena: *yin* and *yang*, or, as embodying a duality in unity where the terms cannot be pulled apart, *yinyang* (Wang, 2012). Relevantly to this study, therefore, these two forces can be considered according to both a dichotomous either/or logic as yin and yang, or to a non-dichotomous non-linear logic as yinyang. Diagram 1 represents the traditional Taijitu, while diagram 2 depicts the modern version of it, that with which most of us are familiar in the West.
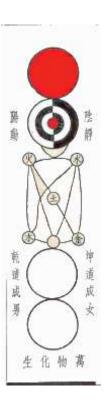
Diagram 1: The Ming-era Taijitu (source: Wikipedia, 2018)

The Wu Ji or still point.
The calm in the midst of
the storm. Stillness in
movement.

These dots indicate that
there is no absolute yin
or yang, each contains
the germ of the other

The outer circle indicates
that all things are made
up of yin and yang

Moving around the
circle shows the
natural cycle from
yin to yang and
back to yin again
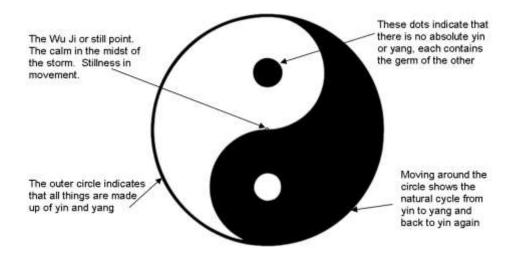
Diagram 2: The simplified, modern yin-yang symbol (source: Allen-Sherwood, 2015)

In the traditional representation, starting from the top, we can see an empty red circle which represents the world before creation – the Non-Ultimate (wuji) (Bidlack, 2006; Wang, 2012). The second circle represents the Non-Ultimate unfolding in the Great Ultimate (Taiji) and in all dualities like yin and yang, respectively represented by the black and white colours, while the red circle in the middle functions as a reminder that all the dualities are characterised by a fundamental unity (ibid.). The third section represents the dualities further unfolding into the five phases (which will be qualified shortly below), whereas the last two circles represent the rising of the plurality of all phenomena (ibid.), the '10,000 natural kinds' mentioned in the well-known Tao Te Ching (Laozi, 2009).

In the more modern depiction of the Taijitu, we can instead clearly see the interlocking patterns of Yin (black) and Yang (white) (or yinyang as a duality in unity) – the first stage of the expression of the universe. While the literal meanings of yin and yang originally simply indicated the shady and sunny slope of a mountain, they then acquired a more general connotation denoting the complementary aspect of all phenomena, including the social and cultural domains (Porkert, 1979/1974; Wang, 2012). As can be evinced by this more recent depiction of the Taijitu, there is a continuous, unbroken, and gradual transition between the two polarities. Each polarity, when manifesting itself at its maximum quantitative gradation, collapses into the other, starting the cycle again, according to a circular rather than linear logic.

113

This is what sinologist Manfred Porkert (1979/1974) calls *quantitative gradations*. That is, as the diagram shows, there is never an absolute yin or yang – as explained by philosopher Robin Wang (2012: 167), "yin and yang mark points in relations across a spectrum and field". Thus, yin continuously changes into yang and vice versa, and thus each polarity always contains the seeds of the other (Porkert, 1979/1974; Wang, 2012). The diagram also symbolises what is fundamentally a process-oriented ontology where all things are entangled and in continuous transformation. More importantly, the two polarities are enveloped within the outer circle – once more, they are dualities in unity within a wider non-dualist context.

While the challenging task of addressing the meaning of yin and yang or yinyang is far beyond the scope of the present research, some brief and exemplary qualifications appear to be necessary as these are crucial concepts in DIA training. As Porkert (1979/1974) explains in his comprehensive accounts of TCM, in their polarity yin and yang respectively comprise the meanings of:

Stasis–Setting in Motion

Consolidation–Inducing Change/Transformation

Awaiting Organisation yet Determinate–Dissolution, Dispersion, Determining yet Indeterminate

Contractive–Expansive

Centripetal–Centrifugal

Intrasusceptive (absorbing into or within the individual)–Extraversive (bringing to the surface)

There are, in addition, a virtually infinite number of correspondences related to yin and yang which stretch from a cosmological dimension to body parts and senses – to give the reader a taste:

Moon–Sun

Autumn, Winter–Spring, Summer

The Hours between Noon and Midnight–The Hours between Midnight and Noon

Cold, Coolness–Heat, Warmth

The Lower part–The Upper part

The Abdomen–The Back

Sour and Pungent–Sweet and Bitter

Even Numbers–Odd Numbers

In short, *any* phenomenon has its own yin and yang dynamics (Wang, 2012). Furthermore, all these distinctions also need to be thought of in terms of dynamic *qualitative overlaps*. Here by qualitative overlaps Porkert (1979/1974) means that within, let us say, a phenomenon which we identify as yang, we can then distinguish between yin and yang aspects, and within them new yin and yang aspects, and so on *ad infinitum*. The following diagram depicts this well:

Diagram 3: The qualitative overlaps of yin and yang (source: Hilty, 2010)

Of course, and crucially, within a process-oriented ontology identifying something as yang or yin is merely a heuristic device – these are analytical categories employed to pin down the nature of a specific pattern involved in the specific process one wishes to consider at any given time (Wang, 2012). Hence distinguishing between yin and yang is a fictive yet instrumental analytical exercise which aims to capture and act upon complex dynamic patterns.

Importantly, to achieve this aim TCM does not employ only dualities in its analyses. For instance, the body-mind duality can be broken down into the tripartite and more nuanced body-mind-spirit

distinction according to the 'three treasures' *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* (Beaupre, 2011; Frantzis 2006/1993; Wang, 2012). In addition, yin and yang further unfold into the 'Five Evolutive Phases', which represent different qualitative manifestations of chi. These are Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal. As shown by diagram 4, these phases are linked to each other through cycles of production, conquest, and violations. For instance, water produces wood, but then is conquered by earth, and, can also rebel against wood, inverting the cycle in violation (Porkert, 1979/1974).
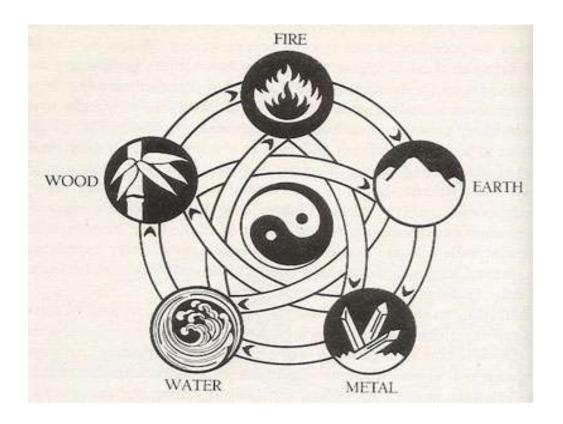
Diagram 4: The five interrelated elements of TCM (source: White Tiger Healing Arts, 2018)

At this point, it is perhaps obvious to the reader that each phase has its own yin-yang dynamics (Porkert, 1979/1974). So, for instance, water has its own yin and yang (ibid.). Moreover, each phase (or element) is part of a system of correspondences cutting across material and immaterial experiential dimensions. Water is linked, for example, to winter, to cold, to north, to the time between 3pm to 7pm, to the colour black, and so on (ibid.). Importantly, however, each phase is also linked to the materiality of the body, to the senses, and to embodied dispositions and body

116

movements. Thus water is linked to ears and hearing, to the organs of bladder (yang) and kidney (yin), to the bones, to shaking, to moaning, and to the affect of fear (which in turn can be yin or yang – e.g., fear can make one freeze or run away) (ibid.). This sophisticated system goes on to the twelve meridians, the twenty-four meridians – the meridians being the vessels, channels, or conduits permeating the whole body through which the chi flows – and so on down to the hundreds of acupuncture points (ibid.).

In fact, along with yin and yang, and the five phases, the notion of chi (or qi or ki) is the other key concept in TCM. Chi is the notion which injects dynamism into all the dualities, phases, and analytical distinctions. While the literal translation of the term might be close to the English 'air', 'breath', or 'vapour', the actual meaning of the term is difficult to grasp (Hsu, 2005). Chi is, in fact, the stuff permeating the universe, which has agency and brings about transformation (ibid.). Chi manifests itself in different qualitative modes and on different registers, from a macrocosmic dimension related to meteorological, climatic, and immunological effects, to a microcosmic level concerned with functional relationships within the body as outlined above (Porkert, 1979/1974). In simpler terms, chi is a psychophysical energy which has a simultaneous effect on both mind and body (Yuasa, 1993).

On the ground of the above, Porkert (1979/1974) argues that TCM is a *medicine of systematic correspondences* primarily based on a synthetic and inductive epistemological model. By inductivity Porkert (ibid.) means a mode of knowledge which identifies a connection between two effective positions taking place at the same time but in different places in space. This contrasts with the logic of causality which deals with the link between two effective positions given at different times but in the same place in space (ibid.). This is reiterated by Wang (2012: 4) when she notes that within Daoist cosmology, "[a]n event or action happening or performed in one domain affects corresponding factors in another domain. This cosmology is not based on linear causality between distinct entities but rather on making a connection between entities and phenomena" – this logic, as the reader will realise later, also underpins Spinoza's principle of mind-body correspondence.

All in all, despite their holistic connotation, these Eastern traditions avoid conflationisms or reductionisms by employing several analytical categories which, although always grounded in a wider relational framework, have their significance in their own right, and are able to effectively address pragmatic issues and concrete situations. Here nuanced analytical distinctions are fictive yet functional tools to get to know and change patterns and dynamics within a world conceived of as an ongoing relational process – as observed by Wang (2012: 10):

> Each element influences and shapes the other. If yin and yang are interdependent and mutually inclusive, then a change in one will necessarily produce a change in the other […] This mutual resonance is crucial to yinyang as a strategy because it entails that one can influence any element by addressing its opposite, which in practice most often takes the form of responding to yang through yin.

This is, once more, an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist conceptual framework, where all dualisms are enveloped in a wider non-dualist context, and where there is a clear distinction between ontological conclusions and epistemological truths – again in Wang's (2012: 49, original emphasis) words:

> This oneness or unity is built on the oppositional forces of reality. There would be no point in emphasizing the one if differentiation were not already assumed, and there would be no way for the *Dao* to explain the movements and patterns of singular things.

This conceptual landscape is of course reflected in the way the body is conceived of, which appears to be consistent with the dual character suggested by the present study. That is, on the one hand, the body is thought of as a process at the ontological level. In this respect, sinologist Nathan Sivin's (1979/1974: xiv; see also Porkert, 1979/1974) arguments strongly resemble Deleuze and Guattari's (2013/1988) Body without Organs when he describes TCM's body as ultimately a "functional system without physical organs". On the other hand, detailed analytical distinctions are crucial to address the structural aspect of the body, and achieve what is the aim of both the Daoist sage and the Chinese traditional doctor: the balance between the internal and external flows of chi (Bidlack, 2006), or, in this thesis' terms, the attunement between internal and external

environments of embodiment – being this internal/external distinction one of the key analytical distinctions within these Eastern perspectives (Wang, 2012).

It is therefore in this light that one needs to interpret the notion of *wu wei* or acting as 'a self without being a self' (similar to Nishida's action intuition), which, as observed by Shilling and Mellor (2007: 538, original emphasis), "refers to not interfering with the natural workings of all things, to not expending unnecessary effort, and to *acting in line with the nature of things*". Here, illness occurs when one acts not in line with the nature of things and internal and external environments of embodiment are disattuned. Conversely, a human being flourishes and culturally structured practices are effectively performed when the mind-body-world alignment occurs ─ it is on these principles that DIA practices are based.

That said, after having outlined the theoretical ground on which the current research is located – i.e., its rationale, aims, and conceptual strategy – in what follows, I wish to address more practical matters. That is, in the next chapter I turn my attention to the empirical arena of this thesis – i.e., the ethnographic case study of DIA, the epistemological issues involved, the methods employed, the research background, and the data collected.

Chapter 6: THE EMPIRICAL ARENA

6.1 The Case Study's Empirical Component – Daoist Internal Arts (DIA)

As its empirical component, the current research employs an ethnographic investigation of Eastern self-cultivation practices rooted in the ancient Daoist tradition: neigong, qigong, and tai chi chuan (or simply tai chi) – all referred to here as Daoist Internal Arts (DIA). As DIA are an exemplification of a culturally structured practice aiming to foster non-dichotomous modes of embodiment, conducting an empirical investigation on people seeking to develop a non-dichotomous way of experiencing and engaging with the world can help us to understand in detail how the shift from the Being to the Becoming occurs (or does not occur). In other words, DIA can help us to understand the conditions fostering the embodiment of dualism(s) and/or dualities.

Hence, in light of its aim(s) (see chapter 5.2), the present research investigates the strategies DIA practitioners employ, the struggles they engage with, and the problems they encounter, in shifting from dichotomous to non-dichotomous modes of embodiment. To do so, the current study asks:

1. How do DIA practitioners talk about their minds, their bodies, and inner and outer dimensions?

2. What are the discursive, corporeal, and affective resources they draw on in their endeavour?

3. What are the roles of conscious deliberations and tacit knowledge of the body in DIA embodied practices?

4. How are the symbolic dimension and verbal communication employed to stimulate particular embodied experiences and embodied outcomes in DIA practices?

Before proceeding to outline DIA, it appears to be important to clarify that the present research investigates them within the complexity of globalisation processes. Having been mostly developed by oral transmission, the wide range of variations of Daoist self-cultivation practices within their

original Eastern context already baffle contemporary researchers (Wang, 2012). Such variety is perhaps even more accentuated in the Western context where practices like tai chi have acquired a particularly hybrid character (Ryan, A., 2008). Nevertheless, the basic features I am outlining here appear to be present in the vast majority of studies already undertaken on these practices (for a recent review, see Channon & Jennings, 2014), as well as in the empirical outcome of the present research (as will be evident in the case study section).

Despite this variety, emphasis can vary between two main polarities (Ryan, A., 2008, see also Wang, 2012), which somehow mirror the crucial distinction between external and internal environments of embodiment. One is that which stresses the martial and combat aspects of DIA, the so-called external technical elements (ibid.). The other – considered more fundamental – is the internal aspect which aims at making significant changes in the mode of embodiment of the practitioner (ibid.). This includes longevity practices which specifically address the practitioner's posture, joints, ligaments, tissues, internal organs, and blood and chi flow (Frantzis, 2006/1993) – in other words, these are practices which directly target the tacit knowledge of the body and deeply embodied habits.

Although the features of neigong, qigong, and tai chi appear to overlap, it is neigong which refers to practices where the emphasis is on changes in the body's physiology and energetics (ibid.). More specifically, in neigong these changes take place following a direction that goes from the inside of the body outwards. This pattern reverses with qigong, which works on a more superficial level by mobilising chi on the surface of the skin to then address more internal dynamics (Frantzis, 2010/2008). Finally, tai chi is a martial art that employs neigong and qigong techniques to improve its effectiveness (Frantzis, 2006/2003). Nevertheless, beyond the actual overlap, the terms in the West are often used interchangeably, with neigong rarely employed, qigong more used in relation to health issues, and tai chi indicating either a health exercise or self-defence training.

According to Daoist teacher Bruce Frantzis (2006/1993, 2006/2003), neigong constitutes the foundation for qigong and tai chi practices – it constitutes the 'grammar' of all DIA. However,

many Western DIA schools advertise their classes as 'tai chi', where all the above components can be more or less stressed. In the UK, the National Health Service (NHS) uses the term tai chi (rather than neigong or qigong) to indicate health exercises. According to the NHS (2015) website: "Tai chi, also called tai chi chuan, combines deep breathing and relaxation with flowing movements. Originally developed as a martial art in 13th-century China, tai chi is today practised around the world as a health-promoting exercise"

That said, however, in line with the Daoist tradition, the ultimate target of DIA is to achieve and actually experience a psychophysical alignment of the embodied agent with forces constituting the material, social and cultural environments in which she is embedded – i.e., an attunement of the internal and external flows of energy. It is in this way that for the practitioner dualism(s) turn into dualities in unity.

As the way I have chosen to identify neigong, qigong, and tai chi – i.e., Daoist Internal Arts – gives away, it is this internal aspect that this thesis narrows its focus on. In turn, this also means that neigong is, among the three, the practice more emphasised in the case study. In fact, despite a proliferation of investigations in Daoist as well as other types of Eastern practices in the last decade (Channon & Jennings, 2014), extant studies have mainly addressed the martial/combat aspect involved in these types of bodywork, and only very few have explicitly focused on embodied practices aiming at a radical transformation of modes of embodiment (e.g., Beaupre, 2011; Brown & Leledaki, 2010). In this respect, an explicit invitation to investigate Daoist self-cultivation practices and understand the body pedagogics involved in those comes from Shilling and Mellor (2007).

Drawing on Heidegger's argument on technological 'enframing', Shilling and Mellor (ibid.) note that human embodiment has been increasingly shaped by modern technological innovations. Contextualised within the current study's perspective, if one adds to Heidegger's (1977) predominance of instrumental rationalism and mastery over nature the arguments of Elias (2000/1994) on the increased rationalisation of bodies and on the detachment from our sensuous

and carnal condition, it could be argued that the modern era has been characterised by the development of dichotomous modes of embodiment where dualisms like mind and body have become phenomenologically salient (see also McGilchrist, 2010/2009).

On this ground, Shilling and Mellor (2007) ask, what kind of loss is involved in a technological culture where embodied subjects are often positioned as a 'standing reserve' for the efficiency required in contemporary society? In order to answer this question, they contend, it might be helpful to look at cultural contexts where these non-dichotomous modes of embodiment are not fostered. As exemplary of those, Shilling and Mellor (ibid.) suggest looking at the Daoist tradition and practices such as tai chi or qigong, where rather than a stress on efficiency and production, what is promoted is the embodied agent's alignment with material, social, and cultural environments.

When commenting on the notion of wu wei and evoking Deleuze and Guattari, Shilling and Mellor (ibid.: 539, original emphasis) appear to envisage a non-dichotomous experiential dimension which very much resonates with the Becoming – they call it 'being' instead:

> If the cultivation of actionless action [i.e., wu wei] and its various techniques constitute the central body pedagogic means through which Taoist culture is transmitted, we can characterise the major experience associated with this form of learning as *being;* a process in which embodied subjects achieve the sense of an increasing *connection* to, and *interdependence* with their surroundings […] The result or outcome of this experience of being associated with Taoist body pedagogics is that the embodied subject is turned not into an instrumental object, a standing reserve for efficiency, but exists in a state of *immanence* with respect to the environment. This notion of bodily immanence has not been subject to much exploration. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) approach part of what is involved here in developing their concept of the 'Body Without Organs'; a metaphorical way of talking about how the relations we establish as organic beings are not limited by our material bodies. More specifically, the immanence experienced by the embodied subject of Taoism involves an alignment with the energies and forces that constitute all social and natural phenomena; an alignment that facilitates an emboldening of the individual enabling them to develop the full potentialities of their embodied self.

In light of all the above, DIA seem to be a particularly promising empirical ground to understand the nuances involved in body pedagogics fostering non-dichotomous ways of knowing and engaging with the world. In wider terms, and thus in relation to the dynamics involved in the incorporation of cultures, to employ Mellor and Shilling's (2014: 13, original emphasis) words once more, this Eastern self-cultivation practice can help us to map out:

> [T]he mutual interactions and co-constitutions that occur among our *physiological responses* to stimuli, the culturally variable manner in which we *feel* those responses, and our own *interpretive classification* of and *reflections* on such feelings, as well as on our existence in the world and cosmos more generally.

Consistent with the Daoist tradition and TCM, rather than eschewing the mind-body relationship, or setting mind and body in opposition, DIA actively engage with these terms and exploit the analytical potential of mental and physical experiential dimensions. In this way, DIA are underpinned by an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist conceptual framework within a psychophysical worldview. Indeed, such framework constitutes a common ground for Eastern self-cultivation practices, which, as observed by Yuasa (1999, in Nagatomo, 2006), pursue a shift from commonsensical/disjunctive/Cartesian dualism (and an either/or logic) to a correlative dualism (and a paradoxical logic), where the terms constituting dualism(s) become attuned, and one can actually experience their ontological unity.

In fact, differently from a Western standpoint of a given, constant, and universal relationship between mind and body – *the* mind-body problem or *the* mind-body relationship – an Eastern perspective would conceive of the relationship between mind and body as variable among different people, variable within the same individual, and indeed amenable to change through specific embodied practices (Yuasa, 1987). On this ground, the typical Western question 'what is the relationship between mind and body?' would not make much sense, and would instead be replaced by the question 'how does the relationship between the mind and the body come to be?' or 'how does the mind-body relationship change?' (ibid.). That said, while I will return to these arguments

in more depth as the case study unfolds, at the moment I wish to discuss the epistemological issues involved and the methods employed in my empirical endeavour.

6.2 Epistemological Issues – Expanding the Empirical

If one starts from the premise that embodiment is the ground of any type of experience and knowledge, then researching embodiment itself is an extremely challenging endeavour (Brown et al., 2011). Even more difficult is to envisage methods capable of grasping and conveying the immediacy of lived experience (ibid.). Yet, these which appear to be 'impossible' tasks (ibid.) could turn out to be an opportunity for the discipline of sociology concerned with expanding its empirical repertoire.

In fact, within sociology, the last decade has been characterised by both a crisis and a return to the empirical (Adkins & Lury, 2009). On the one hand, the distinctiveness and expertise characterising social research for half a century is jeopardised by the seemingly more efficient methodological tools employed by private and public institutions outside academic circles (Savage & Burrows, 2007). On the other hand, the empirical has returned to occupy a central role in the field, and rather than as a mere tool to obtain data and advance our understanding of the social world, it is also viewed as a means to make a 'real' difference in society (Law & Urry, 2004; Lury & Wakeford, 2012; see also Barad, 2007). In line with the non-dualist axiom 'knowing is doing', research is thought of as a performative endeavour, also in terms of the production of novel concepts capable of envisaging and bringing about positive change in society (Kincheloe, 2005; Pink, 2009; see also Deleuze & Guattari, 2013/1992).

Overall, as pointed out by Lisa Adkins and Celia Lury, "the special relationship that sociology has with the empirical is changing" (2009: 5), and this state of affairs is to be attributed to changes both in the social reality and in our understanding of "*what the empirical is and how it matters*" (ibid.: 6, original emphasis). Within such debates, it has been suggested that sociological research can acquire its own distinctiveness, value, and purpose by cultivating what has been called the 'art

of listening' (Back, 2007). That is, by developing an attentiveness to what often escapes the empirical accounts produced both inside and outside the discipline – i.e., to what concerns the multi-sensual and more-than-textual.

As it has been argued that social sciences methods have resulted in an extremely limited range of attention (Law & Urry, 2004), producing new concepts and imagining new possible futures for sociological research also means tapping into novel sensual/sensuous worlds and their possibilities (Back & Puwar, 2012). Many urge, in other words, the adoption of an *expanded* empiricism, which, along with (rather than in contrast to) discursive/ideological/structural analyses, is able to extend the borders of empirical investigations to the limit of the phenomenal – to the lived immediacy of actual experience (Clough, 2009).

Rather than on the senses *per se*, here the focus is on the sensual as a portal to access what remains unsaid and therefore goes unnoticed in research (Harris & Guillemin, 2012). In the words of cultural anthropologist Elizabeth Hsu (2008: 433), this means conceiving of the senses as a mediator "between meaning and materiality, [as] interface between body and mind, and between the 'subjective' and 'objective'". At the same time, this study acknowledges that the notion of the senses as a 'window to the world' is an inheritance of the Cartesian tradition, and that thus we still appear to lack adequate conceptual tools to address the mind-body dualism in sociological research (Hsu, 2008; Nettleton, 2010).

It is in the context of the above debates that the present study aims to provide an original contribution to the expansion of the notion of the empirical in sociology. In more detail, the current research intends to be particularly attentive to neglected phenomenological dimensions, such as those regarding the internal environments of embodiment, and the range of ways we can experience and act in the world. Differently from most contemporary approaches to wider sociological issues and to embodiment more specifically, the current study intends to take into account two different types of knowledge: a non-dichotomous form of knowledge underpinned by a non-linear logic, and a dichotomous form of knowledge sustained by an either/or logic.

Linked to this, I have suggested retaining an analytical distinction between an ontological and epistemological level of analysis, while at the same time bearing in mind the fictive character of this, as well as other, analytical distinction(s). It is in this light that I would like to take on board critical pedagogist Joe Kincheloe's (2005: 329-330) observation on the "fictive dimension of research findings [and his assertion that] there are fictive elements to all representations and narratives". As will become clearer in the course of the case study, despite their fictive character, representations, narratives, and levels of analysis can be nevertheless effective heuristic devices to get to know, and bring about change in, the world.

Furthermore, by being unapologetically theory driven, the present study explicitly acknowledges something which is nevertheless inevitable in any research endeavour – i.e., the employment of theory or a worldview as a lens through which the data are analysed (Brown et al., 2011; Finlay 2009; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). Again Kincheloe (2005: 329) puts this well when he says that:

> "[F]acts" never speak for themselves […] whether we like it or not, all researchers are destined to be interpreters who analyze the cosmos from within its boundaries and blinders. To research, we must interpret; indeed, to live, we must interpret.

At the same time, as noted by integrative psychotherapist Linda Finlay (2009: 13), this acknowledgement does not preclude a:

> '[P]henomenological psychological' attitude as a process of retaining a reductive openness to the world while both restraining and using preunderstandings [so that] the researcher engages a dialectic movement between bracketing preunderstandings and exploiting them reflexively as a source of insight.

As observed by Kincheloe (2005) by evoking singer/songwriter Johnny Cash, this is a matter of walking the line – a (fictive) line separating a more detached from a more engaged way of getting to know and acting in the world. This is also "the line [which] separates the decontextualization of the idiosyncrasy of the personal from the unreflective, authoritarian voice of truth of the

reductionistic researcher" (Kincheloe, 2005: 343). Put another way, one must walk the line separating naïve subjectivism and the inverse mistake of positivist objectivism.

That is, while the researcher needs always to be made visible in the production of knowledge, such concern does not need to turn into an excessive emphasis on the researcher's own lived experience which would move the focus away from the empirical arena and the theoretical discussion, thus ultimately failing to situate the whole research process in the specific material, social, and cultural contexts in which it takes place (Carrington, 2008). Reiterated through the theoretical lens of the present research, the above also means walking the line separating an either/or, mediated, and dichotomous *and* a non-linear, immediate, and non-dichotomous mode of conducting research – i.e., finding a balance between the Being and the Becoming.

In turn, considering both these modes involves the attunement between theory and practice. In other words, the theoretical aspect of the present research needs to reflect our phenomenological world – i.e., to the actual ways we get to know and act in the world. In this respect, by acknowledging the primacy of experience in any theoretical speculation, this thesis takes into serious consideration James' (1996/1912: 42, original emphasis) radical empiricism:

> To be radical, empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, *the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and as any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system*. Elements may indeed be redistributed, the original placing of things getting corrected, but a real place must be found for every kind of thing experienced, whether a term or relation, in the final philosophical arrangement.

Hence, James' (1996/1912: 47) "[r]adical empiricism […] is fair to both the unity and the disconnection" – i.e., to both the relational and detached character of embodied research. Or, reiterated in the present study's terms, to both the Becoming and the Being.

Finally, I wish to make clear that my endorsement of a phenomenological approach ought not to be equated to a relativist or idealist claim and the denial of the existence of a world independent from my mind (see also chapter 3.5). I am, rather, advocating what Colin Bell and Howard Newby (1977: 19) define as "a constructive scepticism and ethical and logical scrupulousness", and thus positioning myself within a critical realist landscape (e.g., Sayer, 2006/2000; Shilling, 2012/1993, 2005). Having outlined the epistemological issues involved, we can move to the more pragmatic aspects regarding the methods employed.

6.3 Methods – A Multidimensional Approach

As already stated, the present research comprises a *case study* of two self-cultivation practices: Daoist Internal Arts (DIA) and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP), constituting the empirical and theoretical components respectively. In this sense, the methods outlined below only relate to the case study's empirical component – i.e., DIA. DIA practices are explored by means of an *ethnographic* investigation utilising the following set of interrelated and overlapping methods which aim to account for the multidimensional character of embodiment:

- *Participant Observation*
- *Auto-Phenomenology*
- *In-depth Semi-structured Interviews*
- *Drawing as Research Method*
- *Multimodal Discourse Analysis*

As it offers an extremely flexible approach which nevertheless can provide a comprehensive, holistic, and yet in-depth and detailed insight into a specific and complex issue in context, in the last forty years, *case study* research has become common practice across a great number of disciplines (Harrison et al., 2017).

Ethnography is a practice aiming at communicating the knowledge acquired and evoking the experiences lived during an empirical investigation to others. According to social anthropologist Sarah Pink (2009: 22):

> Ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, cultures and individuals) that is based on ethnographers' own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations, and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced.

Pink's arguments appear consistent with those of Finlay's (2014: 10), who observes that "[t]he ultimate aim of phenomenological research is to explicate and express in language embodied experience, and to do so in a way that captures the ambiguous layers of meaning as fully as possible". In this respect, and resonating with Nishida's basho theory, the current study endorses "an emplaced ethnography that attends to the question of experience by accounting for the relationship between bodies, minds and the materiality and sensoriality of the environment" (Pink, 2009: 25).

A crucial part of the ethnographic process is *participant observation*. Participant observation allows the ethnographer access to the way the world is experienced by other people. This involves joining participants in the same practical activity and thus learning to attend to things and understand what is possible or not to afford in the practice one is engaged in, as any novice practitioner would do (Ingold, 2014; Pink, 2009).

While any ethnographic activity should always involve particular attention to the body, the senses, and those feelings which tend to escape verbalisation – i.e., it should always be a 'sensory ethnography' (Pink, 2009) – this attention acquires an even stronger significance for the present research investigating DIA, whose target is precisely that of addressing the tacit knowledge of the body. In this respect, the ethnographic approach employed in this thesis is particularly sensitive to the arguments of Loïc Wacquant (2006/2004: viii, original emphasis) when he proposes "a

sociology not only *of* the body, in the sense of object, but also *from* the body, that is, deploying the body as a tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge".

In this way, Wacquant contends, "fieldwork [becomes] an instrument of theoretical construction" (2013:19), and although, as already argued above, "theory is always driving field enquiry" (ibid.: 31), "the method thus tests the theory of action" (ibid.: 27). Again, in Wacquant's (ibid.: 27, original emphasis) words:

> '[G]o native' but *go native armed*, that is, equipped with your theoretical and methodological tools, with the full store of problematics inherited from your discipline, with your capacities for reflexivity and analysis, and guided by a constant effort, once you have passed the ordeal of initiation, *to objectivize this experience and construct the object*, instead of allowing yourself to be naively embraced and constructed by it.

That said, 'extra' attention to sensory registers, the body, and bodily changes is added by employing an auto-phenomenological approach. *Auto-phenomenology* (or auto-ethnography) (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010) includes detailed phenomenological description of the researcher's lived experience of DIA practices as well as of the related embodied outcomes.

In relation to Eastern perspectives of the body, auto-phenomenology has been deployed in a small study of Shiatsu – a therapy of Japanese origin but based on TCM's principles (Masunaga & Ohashi, 2001/1977) – by anthropologist Glyn Adams (2002). By attending to both the represented (and socio-culturally situated) and the non-representational (and multi-sensory) aspects of a Shiatsu session, the study carried out by Adams (ibid.) demonstrated that auto-phenomenology can tap into that elusive intertwinement *between* the affective and corporeal nature of DIA training, *and* the symbolic/discursive connotation attached to it. By tapping into this intertwinement, auto-phenomenology can also provide a sensitivity intended to address the reflexivity issues involved in conducting research (Spry, 2001).

Despite their limitations, particularly in terms of accessing the tacit knowledge of the body, *in-depth semi-structured interviews* are an essential tool for gaining insight into informants'

experiences, as well as for the creation of an intersubjective and relational space where informants actively co-participate in the research process (Burman, 1994). The semi-structured character of interviews with open-ended questions provides the necessary flexibility for an epistemic strategy to highlight and follow up the complexities and inconsistencies of the informants' accounts and their sense-making of the practice of DIA.

In fact, faithful to a phenomenological and multidimensional approach, this study intends to endorse what pedagogist Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (2009) calls multi-modal interviewing. In her approach to interviewing, Svendler Nielsen draws on the 'focusing technique' advanced by psychotherapist Eugene T. Gendlin (1978/2003). This therapeutic practice aims at bringing to consciousness, and thus in a representational form, embodied experiences initially blurred and difficult to verbalise – i.e., what Gendlin (ibid.: 33) calls "felt sense [which] doesn't come to you in the form of thoughts or words or other separate units, but as a single (though often puzzling and very complex) bodily feeling".

In short, Gendlin's technique aims at tapping into the emergence of our lived experience, in the in-between territory "of the implicit not-yet in its intersection with the explicit" (Glanzer, 2014: 49). As noted by psychologist David Glanzer (2014: 49), for Gendlin "this encounter happens at the 'edge', and experiencing at/of the edge he calls the 'felt sense'". Not only does this resonate with Hayles' call to 'ride the cusp' (see chapter 3.5), but it also appears to be consistent with a research phenomenological approach aiming at "our experiencing at the 'border zone' between what we are conscious of and what we are not quite aware of" (Finlay, 2014: 9).

Svendler Nielsen (2009) expands on Gendlin's technique by integrating it with Arnold Mindell's work on shifting channels in our ways of experiencing the world – indeed an acknowledgement of the multidimensionality of our embodied condition as well as of different ways to get to know and act in the world. That is, Mindell (1985, 1997, in Svendler Nielsen, 2009: 89) acknowledges that we continuously switch between different experiential dimensions such as, for instance, the visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic. Therefore, in her investigation of children's embodied experiences,

Svendler Nielsen (2009) employs a range of strategies − including metaphors, colours, sound, music, and the body's movement – to allow her participants to represent their felt sense. For instance, she asks children to describe a particular sensation by employing a single word, a musical instrument, or a particular gesture. Significantly, Svendler Nielsen's multi-modal interviewing includes also the use of drawing, the fourth research method employed by the present research.

Already utilised to access participants' experiences of complementary alternative medicine (CAM) therapies, including TCM (e.g., Morgan et al. 2009), *drawing* (Guillemin 2004) has been identified in the last decade as a valuable, yet still underused, empirical resource for complementing more 'traditional' methods in social research. By enabling the researcher to explore how participants make sense of their experiences beyond the use of spoken or written words, drawing appears to be particularly fruitful for the current research's aims. As suggested by Marilys Guillemin (2004), and consistent with Svendler Nielsen's multi-modal interviewing, the use of drawing is best combined with interviews and participants' interpretations of their own drawings.

That is, following Guillemin's (ibid.) procedure, during or after an interview, the researcher asks the participant to draw a quick sketch expressing a particular sensation, feeling or embodied experience that emerged as salient from the interview process. This request is then ideally followed by a discussion of the participant's choice of image, colour, composition, and layout. Despite remaining a form of representation, analysing drawings with participants helps research probe the interrelation between experience and symbolism, and thus enables us to go beyond the limitations of previous analyses that have focused on one or the other, or conflated them, or set them in opposition. Interviews and drawing commentaries are audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed through multimodal discourse analysis, and subsequently integrated with the critical visual methodology elaborated by Guillemin (ibid.) for drawings.

By emphasising the importance of emplacement in the complex interactions between language, gestures, actions, physical layout, and time in the production of discourse and discursive practices, *Multimodal discourse analysis* (De Saint-Georges, 2004; Norris, 2004, Scollon & Levine, 2004)

133

intends to overcome the limitations of a more traditional kind of discourse analysis (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Promising for the present research's concerns (and consistent with Pink's emplaced ethnography), these approaches attend to how the material and the symbolic are intertwined in a symbiotic relationship wherein they inform, transform, and shape one another.

Conceiving of the body as a point of mediation in the material and symbolic constructions of identities, the insights of methodologies like these appear suitable for integration with empirical approaches which focus on the senses and corporeal aspects – indeed neglected in multimodal discourse analysis. In fact, all the methods outlined above will help to understand how representational meanings affixed *to* the body and the pre-reflective meaning enacted *by* the body interlace to produce emergent meanings, experiences, and changes in modes of embodiment.

6.4 Researcher and Research Background

In hindsight, it seems fair to say that the current research project has roots in my background as a Zen Shiatsu therapist. Zen Shiatsu (Masunaga & Ohashi, 2001/1977) is a Japanese and modern form of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) drawing on the Buddhist tradition, Daoist principles, and TCM. In line with the Zen tradition, in Zen Shiatsu treatment the lived experience is more significant than words, and verbal interaction is traditionally kept minimal and limited to the social encounter pre- and post-treatment. Zen Shiatsu uses finger, thumb, elbow, knee, and foot pressure, as well as gentle manipulations and stretches aimed at bringing about change in the flow of chi in the energy channels/meridians located on the surface of the body – those same that are employed in acupuncture. By operating merely on a tacit and intercorporeal level, the practitioner is meant to show the embodied patient ways of negotiating the mind/body/environment relationships which would promote well-being and keep disease at bay.

My nearly four years' training in this type of CAM also involved the study of TCM and the development of a sensitivity to detecting chi in someone else's body. I learned to feel and thus identify the TCM channels/meridians, and along these, yang and yin points. However, my training

in Shiatsu did not prepare me for Daoist practices like neigong, which, in contrast with the superficial level of Shiatsu, works on internal energy channels at a deeper level in the body. Moreover, and differently from a Shiatsu patient, in DIA the conscious deliberations of the practitioner play a crucial role – i.e., at any given moment when practising, the DIA practitioner needs to be fully aware of what she is doing and of the changes taking place or not taking place in her body. On this ground, I identified DIA as a promising empirical arena to help me advance my understanding of the relationships this thesis addresses: those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, representational and non-representational.

Yet it was not easy to find DIA classes which 'made sense' to me. Reflecting extant research in the field, within the Kent and London areas, I came across classes where the emphasis was merely on the combat aspects of practices like tai chi; or, at the opposite end, I attended qigong classes that were all about relaxation, mental visualisations, and new age discourses. Equipped with my training in Shiatsu and study of TCM, I was instead looking for practices that could effectively tap into the pre-reflective knowledge of the body and bring about change in modes of embodiment. When I found a suitable instructor – Brian (a pseudonym) – I then stuck to his classes of neigong, qigong and tai chi. I only later realised that Brian had trained with one of the most popular teacher of DIA in the Western world: Bruce Frantzis. Instead, what initially impressed me in Brian's classes was his knowledge of the Daoist tradition and the ability of his students to both mobilise chi in their bodies and detect chi mobilisation occurring (or not) in someone else's body.

6.5 The Data – The Sources

Accordingly, a significant part of the present research's data is related to Brian's classes and thus to the teaching of Bruce Frantzis. At times, this also happened indirectly, as I unwittingly ended up interviewing DIA practitioners and instructors contacted outside the circle of the classes I was attending who were somehow related to Frantzis (something that I only realised during

interviews). Overall, I interviewed fifteen participants, who appeared to reflect the typology of people engaging in DIA found in past studies within a Western context. The majority of them were females. Most participants had a middle-class background and were educated to degree level or above (indeed, four of them were or had been academics). Only one participant – an experienced DIA teacher – had a working-class background. All the participants were British apart from two Italians, a Chilean, and a Korean.

Furthermore, my research expanded its scope through the internet – a source that most participants appeared to draw on in different guises. Therefore, in addition to in-depth semi-structured interviews, online videos and DIA-dedicated websites were also analysed. While this research is not specifically concerned with the relationship between digital/cyber technology and embodiment (for an account of it, see for instance, Featherstone & Burrows, 1995), it seems worth noting that data have supported the argument that, in relation to a specific practice, it is possible to identify common narratives across various sources (e.g., interviews, websites, literature) (Elliott & Corinne, 2017). In fact, it became apparent that Frantzis' teaching, at least in its core principles, was representative of that of other DIA pedagogics in the West across all the media analysed by the current research.

Participants were recruited from the DIA classes I attended, as well as through adverts, leaflets and the snowball sampling technique. BSA (2017) ethical guidelines were followed. In order to ensure respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, a pseudonym replaced respondents' names (apart from the name, no personal data were collected – rather, further information was gathered during interview). Electronic files of the data were password protected while hard copies were locked away in a filing cabinet. Participants' personal details were destroyed after the completion of the project. Participants were asked to read the information sheet and sign a consent form before taking part in the research. The information sheet was kept by the participants.

There were no particular risks involved in taking part in this project. The general risks of participating in an interview are the potential to become upset by a particular question or topic. A

debriefing at the end of interviews was designed to identify and address such situations in case they arose – this however never occurred. Participants were told that they could decline to answer questions and could stop the interview any time they wished. In addition, for any query/concern that participants wished to discuss, the researcher's e-mail address was provided in the information sheet.

Data were not analysed with qualitative data analysis software (QDAS). Without going into the details of debates discussing whether QDAS constitutes an appropriate tool for a phenomenological approach (Davidson & di Gregorio, 2011) or is unable to aid phenomenological insight (van Manen, 2014), due to the particular character of the research (addressing the relationship between the reflective and pre-reflective, and thus concerned with the more-than-textual) and to my past positive experience at undergraduate level, I have opted not to use computer software for my analysis. Armed with paper, pencils, and removable adhesive index flags, as well as through extensive note taking, I have instead aimed to become familiar with the text while at the same time relating it to the auto-phenomenological process. Here, rather than on the more 'traditional' coding, I have instead followed van Manen's (2014: 320) suggestion on three levels of reading: 'wholistic', 'selective', and 'for detail', always (and again) walking the line between the three. Diagram 5 gives the reader a numeric sense of the data analysed:

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Study Data

- Interview transcriptions: 15   – about 156,494 words
- Video transcriptions: 21   – about 90,289 words
- Extracts from DIA-dedicated websites – about 49,149 words
- Auto-phenomenological diary   – about 40,000 words
_____

List of Participants

1. Alice	9. Hannah
2. Brian	10. Helena
3. Caroline	11. Jane
4. Catherine	12. Jennifer
5. Chris	13. JI-A
6. Danielle	14. Michael
7. Francisca	15. Nadine
8. Giuan-Giu	

</div>

Diagram 5: Summary of study data and participants

Conclusion – Ready to Set Off

I have therefore done my best to prepare for the journey ahead. That is, I have studied the maps of the adjacent territories, like those already explored by Shilling with his body pedagogics approach, by Nishida with his theory of basho, and by ancient traditions like Daoism and TCM. More or less explicitly, all these previous explorations appear to be grounded in a perspective of embodiment as possessing a dual character, and adopt the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context.

I have furthermore equipped myself with a case study of two self-cultivation practices – i.e., Daoist internal arts (DIA) and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP) – which aim to shift from the dichotomous mode of embodiment of the Being to the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming. Moreover, I have chosen my *modus operandi* – i.e., a phenomenological approach aiming at walking the line between the Being and the Becoming, and I have selected a number of useful tools – i.e., a set of methods which can help me to address the multidimensionality of embodiment and the relationship between pre-reflective and reflective forms of knowledge.

Overall, my hope is that by following this dual[8] path I will arrive in post-Cartesian territories, where I will be able to theorise our embodied condition by accounting for its individuated, differentiated, and structural aspects while at the same time being faithful to a process-oriented ontology. Put another way, I am about to embark on a journey which I hope will take me from the

---

[8] The employment of the term 'dual' to represent the character of embodiment emerging from the present study is an issue that deserves more space, which is not available here. However, albeit briefly, I believe it is worth touching on it.

'Multidimensional', 'chiasmic', 'processual', and, above all, 'paradoxical', are other terms that point to the meaning I wish to convey, and which I use in this thesis.

Yet, when it came to the choice of only one term, I was caught between 'double' and 'dual'. I eventually opted for 'dual' as it is a term which appears to me unafraid to engage with dualism(s) in a direct manner, and which constitutes the etymological root of both '*dual*ism' and '*dual*ity', thus addressing both the analytical distinction between the two and the shifting nature of embodiment.

As will become clearer in the approaching part III of this thesis, I contend that language cannot fully grasp embodiment's character but only indicate or evoke what needs to be experienced first-hand – it is in this light that I would like to invite the reader to consider my arbitrary choice.

Being to the Becoming – the account of this exploration is provided in the third and last part of this thesis, which follows below: the case study.

Part III: CASE STUDY – TURNING DUALISM(S) INTO DUALITIES

Introduction – Revisiting Dualism(s)

On the premises of i) the analytical distinction between mistaken ontological conclusions and evident epistemological truths related to the mind-body relationship, ii) the dual character of embodiment as a phenomenon caught between a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, and iii) the conceptual strategy whereby dualism(s) are enveloped in a wider non-dualist context and turned into dualities in unity, I explore a post-Cartesian perspective of embodiment with a case study constituted by two self-cultivation practices aiming at the embodied agent's radical shift from the dichotomous mode of the Being to the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming. These self-cultivation practices are Daoist Internal Arts (DIA), which I use as the research's empirical arena; and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy (SPP), which I employ as a theoretical lens to read the data.

The case study analyses the modes of embodiment of the Being and the Becoming, alongside four exemplary phenomenological relationships: those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and representational and non-representational forms of knowledge. These relationships emerge from my investigation as regulated by a Spinozian principle of dynamic correspondence according to which what occurs on one of the two terms is paralleled on the other. Ontologically, this principle of correspondence implies that the experiential dimensions constituting these relationships are not conceived of as two distinct entities. Epistemologically, however, this correspondence is not fixed, but amenable to change, so that the terms of each relationship can be experienced by the embodied agent distinct or united according to dichotomous and non-dichotomous modes of embodiment respectively.

On this ground, the aim of both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza is to actively engage with these phenomenological relationships (i.e., those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and representational and non-

representational forms of knowledge), attune their terms at the phenomenological level, and actually experience their ontological unity. It is in this way that the mode of the Becoming and its paradoxical logic acquires an ontological primacy, envelops the fictive yet functional mode of the Being and its binary logic, and dualism(s) are turned into dualities. In this respect, the very ontological/epistemological distinction initially made by the current research is also ultimately a fictive yet functional analytical distinction.

Overall, re-conceptualised as a dynamic process of individuation whereby an immanent dimension self-actualises by bringing about novelty in the world, I propose a view of embodiment as a phenomenon which can shift between different modes, each possessing different degrees of emergent properties and capacities for agency. As such, the outcome of this case study provides a contribution to a post-Cartesian perspective on embodiment which is faithful to a process-oriented ontology while also being able to account for the causal powers of our phenomenological world and individuated dimension.

I elucidate the above arguments by discussing the modes of the Becoming and Being and each phenomenological relationship first within the empirical context of DIA practice, and then theoretically from a Spinozian perspective. This layout intends to make particularly evident the iterative and mutually illuminating dialogue between the empirical and theoretical components of the present study. Moreover, as becomes evident later, this repeated alternation resembles what occurs in DIA training itself, where there is an ongoing dialogue between lived experiences and reflexive deliberations, each informing the other in a circular process. That said, however, towards the end of the case study the conceptual component will become more prominent with the theoretical elaboration of notions such as processes of individuation, agency, affect, and degrees. In other words, to contextualise the research's outcome in contemporary debates, throughout the case study there will be a progressive drift towards theory.

In more detail, in chapter 7 I shed light on the modes of embodiment I have called the Becoming and the Being and on the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context. Here I

illustrate that DIA practitioners actively and instrumentally engage with the experiential dimensions of their phenomenological world, the related dichotomous analytical distinctions, and with an either/or, binary, and linear logic, to bring about emergent properties so that another – non-dichotomous/non-linear/circular – mode of embodiment can become salient.

This empirical evidence is then re-read and thus consolidated theoretically through the lens of SPP. I show that these two modes of getting to know and acting in the world have a long history, of which the most contemporary account is polymath/neuroscientist Ian McGilchrist's explanation of the asymmetry of our brain hemispheres – each attending one of these two modes. Following these introductory historical and physiological accounts, I focus on Spinoza's take on non-dichotomous and dichotomous modes, including their detailed description provided by Deleuze and Guattari.

Here, I show that, similarly to the Daoist tradition, Spinoza acknowledges the fictive character of the Being and the ontological primacy of the Becoming, and employs the former as an instrument to access the latter. Therefore, I illustrate how Spinoza, along with philosophers like William James, Gilbert Simondon, and Alfred North Whitehead, by accounting for both modes of embodiment is able to ground his theorising in a process-oriented ontology without, however, neglecting an individuated dimension and its causal powers.

Once the Being and the Becoming and the attached linear and circular logics have been qualified, I take a closer look at how the shift from one mode of embodiment to the other is achieved in practice in DIA. Starting with mind and body, in chapter 8 I illustrate how, when training, this relationship is regulated by a principle of dynamic correspondence. Here I show that, aiming to attune mind and body, the DIA practitioner is looking for the peculiar feeling corresponding to the specific movement she aims to perform. According to a circular logic, novel feelings yield novel movements, which yield novel feelings and so on, so that changes are amplified on both material and immaterial dimensions of embodiment, and the relationship between movement and feeling turn from dualism(s) to a duality in unity. In this way, the immaterial dimensions of our

phenomenological world are endowed with causal powers, rather than being reduced to epiphenomena.

In the related theoretical discussion, I will illustrate that Spinoza too conceives of the relationship between mind and body as characterised by a dynamic correspondence, rather than an interaction. In this way, he eschews not only the Cartesian hierarchy positioning the mind over the body, but also its inverse standpoint, where the body plays the privileged role over the mind. Hence, for Spinoza, like for the DIA practitioner, the immaterial dimension of the mind and the material dimension of the body possess equal causal powers when it comes to bringing about change in the world.

The common ground shared by the DIA practitioner and Spinoza with regard to the relationship between mind and body functions as a template for the other relationships considered by the present study. Therefore, in relation to internal and external environments of embodiment, in chapter 9 I explain that, in line with the principle of dynamic correspondence, the DIA practitioner wishes to widen the range of her phenomenological field inside the body to obtain a corresponding phenomenological expansion in outer environments, and ultimately attune the two experiential dimensions so that their relationship is turned from dualism(s) to a duality in unity.

Moving to the theoretical terrain, these arguments lead to Spinoza's theory of individuation, and to qualifying what, by borrowing Simondon's terminology, I call processes of individuation – i.e., acts of differentiation according to which the Becoming unfolds into the Being. With the additional support of cognitive scientists/biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's notion of autopoiesis, I explain that for Spinoza individuation means to be attuned with the world, rather than being separate from it – it is in this way that the relationship between internal and external environments of embodiment is conceptualised in a non-dualist fashion.

After having discussed the crucial internal-external relationship, in chapters 10 and 11 I show that in both DIA training and Spinoza's theorising, language can both conceal and reveal corporeality, and the representational can be both disconnected and connected to the non-representational. In

this respect, it is crucial for both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza not to reify language and the representational as dimensions cut off from the corporeal and the non-representational – their ultimate aim here is to attune language and corporeality, the representational and the non-representational, and to tap into the tacit knowledge of the body, rather than remaining on an abstract, fictive, and disembodied dimension.

Furthermore, the theoretical discussion of the relationship between non-representational and representational forms of knowledge leads us to re-turn to the controversial notion of affect. Here I expand my theoretical discussion to show that Spinoza intends to bridge, rather than emphasise, the disattunement between cognition and affect. Therefore, his aim is to consciously address affective dynamics so that change can occur at the level of the tacit knowledge of the body and one's capacities for agency can be increased.

In chapter 12 I then complete my sketch of a post-Cartesian perspective of embodiment with a discussion of a simple yet useful conceptual device – that of the notion of degrees. Here, I illustrate that in both DIA training and Spinoza's theorising the process leading from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment is not conceived of as a single event, but rather as taking place according to different degrees, each characterised by different modes of embodied knowledge and action, emergent properties, and capacities for agency.

In addition, I suggest that the use of the notion of degrees is particularly helpful to theorise dynamic relationships and dualities in unity. That is, the notion can be an effective antidote to sharp divides between, or the reification of, dichotomous and non-dichotomous modes of embodiment, as well as the other experiential dimensions/analytical categories employed in the present study – again, these are all conceived of as fictive yet useful instruments, which can be flexibly employed according to one's specific training goals or theoretical purposes.

I conclude the thesis with an epilogue where the perspective of embodiment advanced here is briefly discussed in relation to the concrete socio-cultural phenomenon of youth leisure practice, rather than DIA. In this respect, it is important to remind the reader once more that the present

research does not investigate DIA *per se*, but rather employs them as an empirical arena to provide a wider theoretical contribution to body studies and social theory. Having introduced the arguments which follow, it is finally time to actually embark on my exploration of post-Cartesian territories – oddly enough, this journey begins inside my body.

Chapter 7: THE BEING AND THE BECOMING

7.1 Shifting from a Dichotomous to a Non-Dichotomous Mode of Embodiment

Diary – Evening, 13th February 2017:

I am 'sinking'. I am seeking a radical shift in the way I get to know and act in the world. I have embarked on a journey which I hope can take me from the Being to the Becoming. It begins by standing still and shifting the focus of my awareness from external to internal environments of embodiment. I am using my mind to scan my body from the top of my head to the soles of my feet – first at the skin level, and then moving inside the body to an increasingly deeper level. I have been taught to look for sensations of 'strength, tension, contraction, and anything that does not feel quite right'. I can feel it: something going down, and sinking down into my feet and below them.

When my mind is dwelling around that area, my right ear releases and I can hear a 'popping' noise in it. I keep on scanning down – my neck, throat, shoulders. I can feel phlegm moving down through my trachea – everything is opening up. My arms feel like they are extending – my entire body feels like it is expanding, and so my awareness. I am now focusing on my pelvis and something unexpected occurs. I can simultaneously feel another movement in the opposite direction: something going up, raising through my spine to the top of my head and above. From the perspective of an external observer, it looks like I am not moving. Internally, however, it seems that there is a lot going on. I am mobilising chi. I am sinking, and thus shifting: from the Being to the Becoming. A lifelong journey, according to the Daoist tradition.

Dualism(s) become dualities. I can distinguish two flows of chi through my body: going up *and* down. At the same time, however, I am somehow aware that one cannot exist without the other – the more it goes down, the more it goes up. It is like being immersed in water and having two currents going in opposite directions through my body. I try to remain in touch with the flow(s) – are there two or is it only one circular flow of chi? My body feels heavy and light at the same time. This is a non-linear logic – a circular logic of paradox. Here, going down means going up. Becoming heavier means becoming lighter. Mind and body are two but are also one. My mind is my body, and my body is my mind – I cannot distinguish them, yet I can. I can still make a

distinction, but in a manner which is strikingly different from before starting sinking – how can I verbalise it? Everything is entangled with everything else. Where once there was separation now there is connection. I keep on sinking.

An imperceptible adjustment in my tail bone spontaneously takes place. It has a dramatic domino effect throughout my body and mind. Somehow my body becomes less substantial and my mind stiller. My feet feel like they are fused to the floor. I feel the lower part of my spine releasing and my buttocks slipping down the back of my thighs – it must be a tiny movement, or perhaps there is no physical movement at all? Yet, it feels significant, like an opening of several inches between vertebrae. Simultaneously, my back opens up, my shoulder blades widen, my chest becomes even softer, my breathing expands further in my belly, and my arms raise a couple of inches with no effort whatsoever nor conscious intention on my part. I am not making all this happen. I am letting it happen. I can feel chi flowing underneath my armpits, my jaws release, and I run out of words to describe the sensation at the top of my head – it feels like a jet of very subtle vapour coming out of my crown[9]. In fact, all this is happening at the same time – there is no past, present, and future. I am indeed one: mind-body-my living room-the world. Or, is there no 'I' here?

In DIA, sinking is the very first step towards the lifelong journey leading to a radical transformation of one's mode of embodiment, and it is initially achieved by means of a standing posture called Jan Juang, which is illustrated by three of Bruce Frantzis'[10] students in diagram 6 and then by myself from different angles in diagram 7.

I had been practising Jan Juang fairly regularly for nearly eighteen months when the above passage was written in my auto-phenomenological diary. And despite clear progress and having also engaged with more advanced DIA practices, I am still struggling with the very first/basic/fundamental step in DIA: sinking. Sinking is one of the many possible ways to render in English the Chinese term *sung*. Relaxation is also often used, and in many of the data extracts which will follow, the reader will find the terms 'relax' and 'relaxation' to indicate *sung*.

---

[9] The crown, at the very top of one's head, is one of the major points/energy gates in TCM and DIA.
[10] As previously specified (see chapters 6.4 & 6.5), Frantzis is the founder of the DIA tradition whose guidelines I am following in my practice. My main instructor, Brian, had trained with Frantzis.
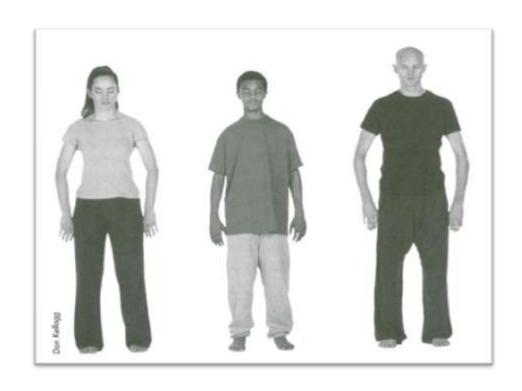
Diagram 6: Students of Bruce Frantzis demonstrate Jan Juang (source: Frantzis, 2006/1993: 94)

Diagram 7: Three angles of Jan Juang (source: author's own)

However, *sung* has little to do with what one usually associates with 'relax' and 'relaxation'. As DIA instructor Paul Cavel (2016: 2, original emphasis) explains: "[t]he Chinese term *sung* is often translated as 'relaxed', but this is a gross oversimplification of the actual state being described. A more accurate translation is 'unbound', a state in which the body loses all unnecessary bindings, all resistances, all tension" – this is a state which can grant access to the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment I call the Becoming. In relation to Jan Juang, the practice is designed to teach the practitioner to stand with the least possible effort.

One of my DIA classmates who also works as physiotherapist – Jennifer – puts it well when she observes that "whether you're a top-class athlete like Usain Bolt or whether you're some paralysed person or whether you're somebody in terrible pain, if you can find that… line of least resistance, the point where the body finds it easier…". In purely physical terms, this means finding an ideal alignment of the body so that one becomes attuned with the force of gravity, as well as with the wider surrounding environment – however, this is easier said than done.

At times extremely frustrating, my struggle does not come as a surprise. Yet, the very first impression on a novice of DIA – with a taste of the Becoming and the experience of novel and pleasant feelings – might appear promising. DIA practitioner Caroline, vividly recalls her first experience with Daoist practices more than 15 years ago:

> Caroline: […] I think the first time that I went to Tai Chi I went, er, to a class and it must have finished about, I don't know, about half-past-nine, ten o'clock, quite late they used to finish, Robert's [a pseudonym] classes, and then I went shopping round Tesco's and I was pushing this t–, shopping trolley round <chuckles> just doing a bit of shopping, erm, and it was about half past ten at night, quarter to eleven, and I was thinking … and I suddenly realised I had so much energy <laughs>, you know, and I was so awake that it didn't feel … I didn't feel tired doing my shopping at, like, half past ten <laughs> at night and in Tesco's in Daoville [a pseudonym] and I just thought god, what's happened. 'cause usually I'm, feel a lot of, erm… exhaustion, you know –

[…] the first time you … you feel that energy, erm, it's amazing because you, it, you know, most times you just think, oh, it's all a load of rubbish and you know, you can't really feel it and that sort of thing.

However, despite what can be exciting initial experiences, endowed with what Spinoza would call 'an increased power of acting' (more on this later), further progress does not come easily – one needs to practise and wait. Websites, books, instructors, and practitioners keep on saying that one needs decades to be able to master these practices, and thus make the shift happen, rather than wait for it to occur (as in the instance of my standing above). I point this out when interviewing my main DIA instructor Brian:

> Vittorio: You discover new things in the first two, three months – there are lots of things changing. But then the more you get <laughs> you know … it's getting harder and harder and erm –
>
> Brian: Oh well sure, then, then gradually you begin to realise the Dao that you, you get a, you get a glimpse of certain things.
>
> Vittorio: Yes.
>
> Brian: But then to stabilise that –
>
> Vittorio: Yeah, yeah.
>
> Brian: So that you can call it when you need it, that takes a bit more practice. […] The, the, the… the useful thing about practice is that over time it, it becomes repeatable and it becomes something that you can gain access to whenever you wish.
>
> Vittorio: Yeah.
>
> Brian: Rather than waiting for it to happen, hoping for it to happen.
>
> Vittorio: Yeah … yeah.
>
> Brian: And being miserable when it's not happening. <Laughs>

Therefore, if that described at the beginning was a particularly good session for me – i.e., where an evident shift did occur – it is a common experience among practitioners to alternate good and bad sessions, those where one might even feel 'miserable', as Brian put it. My diary shows that before the above standing I had very unproductive sessions for a few days, where my practice appeared to get worse rather than better. As Brian says, one might get a glimpse but then encouraging signs may not appear for a while. The shift between the Being and the Becoming is not something that suddenly happens and then remains stable, nor is it characterised by a progression occurring in a linear manner. Rather, it is an ongoing struggle with ups and downs, where the aim is to stay in the Becoming for as long as possible. This is made clear by Frantzis (2006/1993: 25) when he explains that:

> Popular opinion has it that once you have reached a state of emptiness [the Becoming], you stay there, but this idea is false. You merely become increasingly familiar with this state and learn how to spend more and more time there. As long as you live in a physical body, physical needs continue to exert demands, and dwelling completely in emptiness is not possible.

The following extract from the auto-phenomenological diary is a typical example of a frustrating session – unfortunately, a type of session which one would not have trouble finding in my field notes.

Diary – Morning, 9th August 2016:

> Well, I couldn't really get into the standing today. How far I am from the Becoming! My body was perceived in so many different 'pieces'! Similarly, my mind was always wandering away from my body. I focus on bringing the chi down but then I cannot pay attention to the upper part of my body. I focus on releasing my pelvis but then my quadriceps get tense. I focus on breathing in my belly and forget all the rest! I can only focus on one bit at a time and cannot feel everything as one: the feeling of a balloon in my chest, throat and under my armpits, feet grounded, not to mention the left and right balance and my stuck right hip joint! Not only mind and body but, in more prosaic terms, left and right are very disconnected and I ended my standing leaning to the left!

152

In this case, my shift was unsuccessful. I tended to remain on the dimension of the Being, a world of discrete entities where, as participant Helena put it, "my brain is thinking about… intellectual things, problem solving, listening to people, trying to analyse what they understand, what they don't understand, listening for the pieces that are missing". However, as noted by Frantzis (Smalheiser, 1989: 4), when practising tai chi:

> [T]here have to be 30 to 40 major considerations and the whole thing is that these things have to be happening simultaneously. These include such factors as: head straight, tongue at the roof of the mouth, weight shifted essentially onto one side or the other, opening and closing of the joints, how the internal organs are to be dropped.

> As the student did these things over and over, the factors were layered one on top of the other until you could do 20, 30, 40, or maybe 50 things at once without difficulty.

But, how can one focus on all these details at once? Holding a degree in psychology, I learned that we can consciously keep track of only a few 'things' at a time. I ask Brian about it. He sees it as possible when a shift from a yang to a yin type of awareness has taken place[11]:

> Brian: I, I talk about it more like yin mind, so you're, you're allowing, you're allowing in rather than looking out […] You look at a, you look at a painting and rather than looking at all the details – that's yang, that's focussed – you don't see… everything. Or you sit there and you soak it in. Or you know, a landscape, you just let the whole thing come into you. So you're present to the whole thing at once. […If] you let the whole thing soak in, you can then begin to notice how various elements interact with other elements… in a way that you wouldn't if you were just looking at –

> Vittorio: Yeah.

> Brian: – that bit, that bit, that bit.

> Vittorio: You cannot see the connection, again…

---

[11] Here it seems to be helpful for the reader to be aware that the view of a Western mind being prevalently yang as opposed to an Eastern mind being prevalently yin is a dominant discourse in DIA.

Brian: You can't see the connection. And, and the, the way I, you know, so you may look at a painting and realise that a certain bit of it doesn't work, because it's actually not fitting in with… with, with the whole.

This is what Brian also refers to as a 'non-dual state' – what I call the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment of the Becoming. Reiterated in the words of Frantzis (Energy Arts, 2013a):

[Y]our mind starts relaxing and it just encompasses the entire space so it's in everything that you can see all at once.

And that includes your body all at once. There's no part of it that's not there so that anything that's off is recognised as opposed to oh, I recognise this but urgh, lost it, lost my feet, lost my back. It's my mind going for, this part of my mind is fine but the rest of it's gone to lunch. No, the more you relax your mind, everything is in it at once. It's all there simultaneously.

DIA instructor Lee Burkins (Kleiman, 2011a), calls it "Quiet Awareness [which] is a different mode for your mind to be in, and you need that to understand your body, your mind, and your energy. The internal arts are all about accessing this mode and manifesting it".

A phenomenological description of the Becoming which seems to resonate with the arguments of the fictional philosopher SPIDER (i.e., Tim Ingold, see chapter 3.6), which we have previously discussed in relation to material-semiotic theories of embodiment, can be found on the website of an Australian tai-chi school (Brisbane Chen Tai Chi, 2016): "The feeling is like a spider-web. When it moves everything will vibrate". This spider-web description bears similarities to the account provided by DIA practitioner Catherine, who, in turn, appears to be well acquainted with the work of actor-network theorists:

Catherine: There's often a feeling of being kind of … <pause> not just your body but kind of … er … it's hard to describe. Like there are kind of, like, like, like the air isn't just the air, like there are sort of densities and textures and stuff and flows of some sort …around you.

[…]

And … I, it's confounded by a bunch of other things and realisations and having read a ton of Bruno Latour, and so on, since starting doing Tai Chi, but it does … feel as though my self is more dispersed.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Catherine: It's kind of a very hard thing to articulate. I don't feel, I don't feel so discrete from the rest of the world.

For long-term DIA practitioner Michael, it feels like "being wider […] extend[ing] further […] it's more of a … a round so it's, it's like a … almost like a field". Although he (as indeed any other DIA practitioner) finds it difficult to put it into words, when asked to do so, Michael is able to draw a minimal yet effective representation of this experience. As shown in diagram 8, it does look round and like an expansion of one's phenomenological body in what appears to be a circular field, extending also, as Michael makes sure I understand, under the floor.

Diagram 8: Participant Michael's experience in drawn form

In a similar fashion, DIA practitioner JI-A describes it to me as a "sensation of one energy field […a] sense of connection, sense of oneness, sense of presence […] kind of there's no me, there's

no track of time […a] much more bigger [sic] sense of myself". When I asked her to express it with a drawing, JI-A told me she already had some drawings done – diagram 9 is my favourite, which depicts her resting after practice:
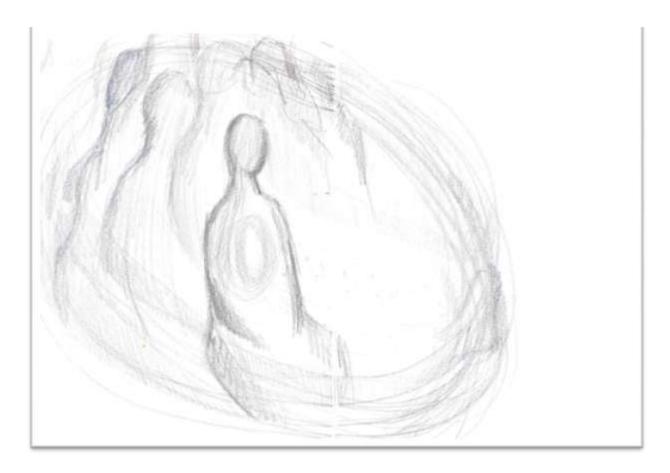
Diagram 9: Participant JI-A's depiction of post-practice

As shown from JI-A's drawing, at the level of the Becoming, embodiment is both one and many, and it expands both inside and outside. Apart from the multiple bodies around the main one, the reader should be able to spot a smaller 'projection' of JI-A's body located opposite her main body on the reader's right hand. Moreover, a circle inside her main body indicates that this expansion also goes in an inward direction. In light of my personal experiences with DIA, I believe that the drawing really gives a sense of those moments when one is practising and the boundaries separating the body from the world acquire different connotations, including those between external and internal environments of embodiment, which I will return to later.

The differences between two main modes of embodiment, which I call the Becoming and the Being, are furthermore described by resorting to several metaphors by DIA instructors. These appear to be particularly helpful also to elucidate the strategy of enveloping the dichotomous mode of the Being with the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming, as well as the two logics underpinning each of the two modes of embodiment: a linear and a circular logic. As shown below, reflecting the fundamental relational, open-ended, and paradoxical character of embodiment, to the Becoming is granted what I call an ontological primacy. Yet, although the Being is considered ontologically fictive, it is however instrumentally employed at the epistemological level to shift to the Becoming.

7.1.1 Linear and Circular Logics

The ontological primacy of the Becoming and the fictive yet instrumental nature of the Being are crucial tenets in DIA training. In turn, these principles are reflected by the different logics attached to each mode – respectively a circular/non-dichotomous and linear/dichotomous logic. That is, while the linear logic attached to the Being is a necessary instrument to access the circular logic of the Becoming, it must not be reified at the ontological level and become therefore an end rather than a means.

To describe these two logics, DIA instructor Dan Kleiman resorts to comics. By citing the book *Understanding Comics* (McCloud, 1993, in Kleiman, 2013a), in one of the broadcasts of his Qigong Radio, Kleiman (2013a) compares Western and Japanese comics:

> [T]here's this one contrast […] in the book, between Japanese comics and Western-style comics, and I always think of like the Batman comic or something where, where Batman punches somebody in the face and you see the punch, you see the fist in the air, you see the face in the next panel, the reaction and the POW and the whatever opening up, and if you look at that panel by panel, you're getting sequential action. Well it turns out that when you look at other styles of comics, like some of these Japanese-style comics, you don't get 12 panels on a page where each panel represents a s-, a sequential step in the action sequence. What you get instead is maybe two

panels, or one full page scene, and the scene is designed to evoke a mood, and the meaning is conveyed through the mood that's set up just in a single shot. So you read it totally differently, you don't go step 1, step 2, step 3. You go mood, <laughs> what comes across, w-, how is the leaf falling off the tree and the Samurai's there with his hand just starting to grasp the hilt of the sword… and what is the look in his face and how are his eyes gazing or settled, and where is he standing, is he leaning, is he set back. Right? All these visual elements combine to convey something that's not action-driven. Even, er, I think this goes even further to, to look at, like, erm … well no I won't go into that but if you have the, have the chance to check out this book it's fascinating and when you step back and you look at a Qigong practice, one where we're standing still, right, some of these same tensions are there. I'm gonna tell you about some of the stuff you do in the practice and at first it's gonna sound like that action sequence, do one thing, do the next thing, do the next thing, but actually the place we wanna get to is we wanna set up a mood where things can unfold. We're gonna talk about setting conditions and then just feeling the conditions, when the conditions are right the energetics will happen as they need to. And you become more of an a-, an, an observer to all this than a doer.

In addition to the description of the two comic styles – Western and Eastern, respectively representing the Being and the Becoming – in the last part of the above extract, Kleiman hints at the fact that in DIA detailed instructions operating at an either/or logic level are not an end, but rather a tool to 'set up a mood where things unfold' according to a non-linear/circular/paradoxical logic – the non-dichotomous logic of the Becoming. This is a crucial aspect of the nature of the relationship between these two modes of embodiment as conceived of in DIA – reiterated in the current research's terms, here the Being is conceptualised as an instrument to shift to the Becoming.

In a different context, but in a similar fashion, Kleiman (2011b, original emphasis) emphasises these arguments by comparing the ways he and his wife approach cooking – respectively according to a linear/dichotomous and non-linear/non-dichotomous logic:

When I started to practice qigong the way she cooks, my whole qigong world changed. Let me tell you how.

158

What I do: I read every recipe word for word and line by line.

What she does: She reads recipes like poetry and gets layers of meaning from the whole thing.

Qigong Lesson: At first, you need to learn your forms and the basics of your qigong set, but eventually, you have to get a feel for the whole, or you'll never get truly energized from the practice.

What I do: I race back and forth from the counter to the cook book, thinking, 'was that a lemon or a lime?'

What she does: She stops and imagines a taste, thinking 'what kind of citrus will compliment these other ingredients? Maybe I'll use an orange instead'….and she's usually right!

Qigong Lesson: You need to develop a feel for your energy flows so that you know what kind of practicing you need to do on any given day or any time of day.

What I do: I freak out when the timer goes off, because the recipe said 10 minutes, but it's been 12 or 13 and I can't tell if it's done yet.

What she does: The recipe calls for a specific cook-time? She knows those are vague guidelines and she'll sniff, pinch, or push on the food to know exactly when it's ready.
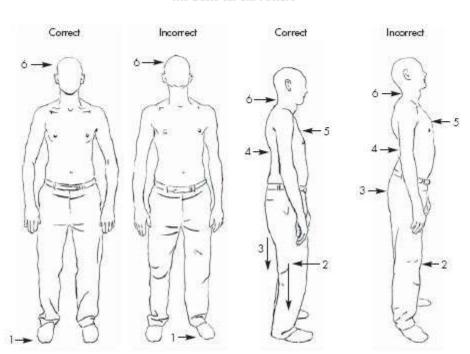
Qigong Lesson: The exercises you practice all have prescribed times and reps, but they're just there so that you learn what 'done' feels like energetically.

So, if you want your qigong practice to be as nourishing as a delicious, healthy meal, practice like my wife cooks: go a few layers deeper than your thinking mind and access your intuition. Learn to practice by feel. Otherwise, your practice will always be like reading out of a cookbook. When was the last time you got full from reading a recipe?

Therefore, a good recipe book cannot automatically turn anyone into a good cook. When cooking, Kleiman remains at the level of the either/or logic of the Being – his goal is that of following the recipe instructions. For his wife, instead, the recipe's guidelines are a mere instrument to achieve her goal of cooking a delicious meal. However, to integrate or attune all the recipe ingredients in

such a manner which brings about the emergent properties of a delicious meal, ultimately, she needs to shift from the mode of the Being to that of the Becoming and go 'by feel'.

To be sure, however, this does not imply that an analytical focus is an irrelevant issue in DIA, and that the emphasis in these Daoist practices is only on feelings, the sensuous, or a non-representational level. As Kleiman (2011c) warns in his blog: "I care just as much about 'how you practice' as 'what you practice'. At a certain point, you should be paying attention to both equally". As discussed in relation to TCM (see chapter 5.5), refined over thousands of years of empirical investigations, fine analytical details are crucial in DIA. For example, the following are only some of the instructions (including a drawing) provided by Frantzis (2006/1993: 96-104, original emphasis) for the Jan Juang standing alignments:

The Basic Tai Chi Posture

Correct Alignments
1. Feet parallel, shoulder-width apart.
2. Knees slightly bent and center of knee over center of foot.
3. Pelvis slightly tucked under, tailbone perpendicular to the ground.
4. Spine gently straightened.
5. Chest slightly rounded and dropped without collapsing.
6. Head and neck straight, eyes and nose parallel to floor.

Incorrect Alignments
1. Feet not parallel.
2. Knees locked and not over center of foot.
3. Buttocks and tailbone protruding backwards.
4. Back not straight, excessively arched.
5. Chest pushed out and raised.
6. Head tilting backwards.

Begin by standing with the outer edges of your feet somewhere between hip- and shoulder-width apart, wherever you find it most comfortable […]

The knees should be slightly bent and the feet parallel […]

Your tailbone should be perpendicular to the floor […]

Your spine should be straightened by 1) gently rolling your hips under, and 2) using your inner back muscles to push the kidneys slightly back. Together these two processes will make the lower part of your spine totally straight […]

The neck and the head need to be held straight; the crown of the head is straight up so that a line drawn straight up from the crown would be perpendicular to the ground. As the neck and shoulders relax, quite commonly the head we want to tilt. It is preferable that the head remain upright, but although a slight forward tilt is acceptable, any backward tilt is not. Also, it is important to gently lift the occiput from the atlas vertebra (that is, lift the skull gently off the neck bone) to reduce compression of the neck vertebrae. The Chinese liken this to the feeling of lifting a hat off a coat rack. [This is called] *ding*, or raising the head […]

In standing, your eyes should be kept initially closed to facilitate your going inward […] Beginners usually need all their concentration to keep track of what is occurring internally, without attending the external environments.

The tongue should be kept touching the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth […]

Ba bei refers to the raising of the spine. The lungs need to expand and open in order to breathe. [T]he raising of the spine (back) in neigong causes two things to occur.

First, the spine physically rises up, as if it were being pulled upwards. This takes some of the curve out of the upper back. The term *ba* in Chinese means to pluck something up, like pulling grass or a plant out of the ground. So as the chest is moving downwards, the back and spine are raising upwards, which allows the lungs plenty of room on a vertical plane.

Second, on the horizontal plane, the back becomes totally rounded. Instead of the shoulder blades coming together as they do in the military posture, they relax downward, spread far apart as

161

possible, so that the lungs expand backwards towards the spine. When the two principles are combined with the straightening of the lower back, the net result is a series of yin/yang balances that are the opposite of the standard military V-shaped posture.

Even more importantly, Frantzis (2006/1993: 237) lists 16 fundamental neigong components which need to be activated in any DIA practice – each component has within it different levels of complexity. These are: 1) breathing methods, 2) feeling, moving, transforming and transmuting internal energies along the descending, ascending and connecting energy channels of the body, 3) precise body alignments, 4) dissolving physical, emotional and spiritual blockages, 5) moving energy through the body's meridian channels and energy gates, 6) bending and stretching the body, from the inside out and the outside in, along the yang and yin meridians, 7) opening and closing all parts of the body's tissues, including the joints, muscles, soft tissues, internal organs, glands, blood vessels, cerebrospinal system and brain, as well as all of the body's subtle energy anatomy, 8) manipulating the energy of the external aura, 9) generating circles and spirals of energy inside the body, controlling the body's spiralling energy currents, and moving chi in the body at will, 10) absorbing and projecting energy to and from any part of the body, 11) controlling energies of the spine, 12) controlling the body's left and right energy channels, 13) controlling the body's central energy channel, 14) using the body's lower dantien[12], 15) using the body's upper and middle dantien[13], and 16) integrating the previous 15 component into one unified process.

Once again, all the above detailed instructions and analytical categories following the either/or logic of the Being are essential to access the experiential mode I call the Becoming, where, however, these distinctions ultimately vanish at the phenomenological level. That is, when I happen to have a good standing and have managed to shift towards the Becoming, I am ceasing to focus on all the above points – they become as one. Conversely, a bad standing is one where I am unable to move beyond the instructions and remain stuck in trying to unsuccessfully keep track of

---

[12] The dantien, or tantien or lower tantien, "is located in the central core of the body, about two or three inches below the belly button [and] is the single most important gate with regard to physical health" (Frantzis, 2006/1993: 138).
[13] These are other crucial energy gates respectively located in the middle of the forehead and chest (Frantzis, 2006/1993).

all the neigong components, the body alignments, and the related feelings without ever putting all the pieces coherently together. Thus, on the one hand, the shift could not occur in the first place without the knowledge and implementation of detailed instructions. On the other hand, once the shift has occurred, I focus on the 'feel' and try to stay with it as long as I can.

In this respect, Cavel makes a distinction between juggling and integrating – the former remains on a linear and binary logic, while the latter has moved to a circular and non-binary logic. The following extract is taken from a chat between Kleiman (2013b) and Cavel:

> Kleiman: I guess what I'm wondering about though is when you say integration, so with the pitfall that I often experience with this, let me put it this way, is that I see a list of 16 neigong and I think, I think about it like juggling and I know, okay.

> Cavel: Aha.

> Kleiman: One ball at a time, I can do two.

> Cavel: Right.

> Kleiman: Three's a little bit different. Now how do I get, keep 16 balls in the air?

> Cavel: Absolutely.

> Kleiman: That doesn't feel like integration, that feels like a long checklist to me... is…

> Cavel: And that isn't integration, that's juggling.

> Kleiman: Okay.

> Cavel: And there's a big difference between the two. Integration is when, let's say, let's take something very simple – the alignments, your tissue stretch is the initial lengthening of the soft tissues, yeah? Bend and stretch, I should say, technically speaking. And open and close. These are three separate neigong elements and you're trying to bring those together into one piece. When they fuse, when they mould, when they merge into one thing so they're not three balls anymore, they're one ball now, that's integration.

[…] there's something that's a little bit different than just oh I've accumulated several different physical skills that all come online at once. It seems to me like there's a, I don't know the right way to say it, it's a mindset or something you're doing with your awareness that allows you to be aware of them simultaneously.

This circular logic of integration – that which I can only glimpse during good DIA sessions – becomes salient when one shifts to the Becoming. Indeed, we have already come across the epitome of this paradoxical logic with the notion of wu wei: acting as 'a self without being a self', or 'actionless action' (see chapters 5.5 & 6.1). Similarly, 'seeking stillness in movement' is often indicated as the ultimate aim of tai chi in DIA discourses. As explained by DIA instructor Don Myers (Theosophical Society, 2016):

'Seek stillness in movement.' So one of the things with these phrases is a, is a little bit of a paradox – how do you move and be still? How do you be still and move?

[This only becomes possible when one accesses] the place where Yin and Yang arise and are undifferentiated. So essentially it's, it's a place where there is no distinction between things that we would normally consider opposites.

As observed by Cavel (2016: 10) when referring to higher-order levels of tai chi:

At this stage of play, your forms can become sublime because the effort that was required in the early years vanishes without a trace. The body feels empty yet full at the same time – a paradox on which only direct perception can shed light. You play the form and, equally, the form plays you.

Several times during my DIA classes, I heard Brian effectively summing up this logic with the paradoxical mathematical formula: 1+1=1. That is, integrating all the components of a practice does not mean assembling them one on top of the other, but rather attuning them in a way that they become less distinguishable, or, can be distinguished according to a different type of awareness – that which I associate with the mode of embodiment of the Becoming.

On the ground of all the above, although this is not explicitly stated as, for instance, in Nishida's Basho theory, it seems evident that DIA employs the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context to pragmatically achieve a shift from the Being to the Becoming. That is, while dualism(s), an either/or logic, and analytical distinctions, are considered ontologically fictive, they are instrumentally, practically, and productively engaged with by DIA practitioners.

When I reveal to him the significance for the present research of the strategy of enveloping analytical dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context, Giuan-Giu – a DIA instructor with 40 years of experience – seems to convincedly approve and make very clear that what is ontologically valid is the non-linear/non-dichotomous logic of the Becoming (rather than the linear/dichotomous logic of the Being):

> Giuan-Giu: Here we are in a dimension let's say dual… relative… if you say… white you say black.
>
> Vittorio: Right.
>
> Giuan-Giu: If you say good you say bad… do you understand? Every time you say something the opposite is also true.
>
> […]
>
> Vittorio: Actually, I call this a logic of paradox, in the sense that it is a paradox if two things that are the opposite are both true or both false.
>
> Giuan-Giu: Well done – that's correct!
>
> Vittorio: What you just said reflects what I am doing with my research… in the sense that it seems to me that they [DIA instructors/practitioners] employ the typical Western logic, an either/or logic, you know? Either white or black […] but then this logic is enveloped in a logic of paradox… where in practice there is a unity of all things and so you cannot make distinctions anymore and hence everything is true and everything…
>
> Giuan-Giu: That is because unity is the foundation, you know?

Vittorio: Yeah.

Giuan-Giu: And to move within this [monist] reality you need the opposites [dualisms]

Vittorio: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

Giuan-Giu: Do you understand?

Vittorio: Yeah.

Giuan-Giu: This is the thing…

Vittorio: Yeah.

Giuan-Giu: But obviously this [the either/or logic] is not the fundamental, fundamental…

Vittorio: Yeah, what is fundamental is unity…

Giuan-Giu: Otherwise you get lost in it.

Therefore, DIA training involves the acknowledgment of two main ways of getting to know and acting in the world: a dichotomous mode – the Being, and a non-dichotomous mode – the Becoming. Following the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a non-dualist context, the DIA practitioner aims to shift from the former to the latter. On this ground, training takes place with the practitioner's awareness that the binary logic attached to the Being is a fictive epistemological tool employed to access the mode of embodiment of the Becoming, where a non-dualist/relational/process-oriented ontology is actually experienced and not only merely theorised. If, instead, the DIA practitioner misunderstands the instrumentality of an either/or logic as an end rather than a tool, that is, if she reifies the dichotomous mode of the Being at the ontological level, she will never be able to move from a linear to a circular logic, and thus bring about the emergent properties characterising the shift to the non-dichotomous Becoming. It is on this ground that the DIA practitioner is able to be ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist.

Having introduced the Becoming and the Being and their relationship as conceived of and lived out within DIA training, I wish now to shed more light on these two modes of embodiment from a theoretical perspective. The acknowledgment of a dichotomous and non-dichotomous way to experience and engage with the world, and the strategy of enveloping the former mode with the latter, constitutes a common ground which, albeit in different forms, has been shared by diverse philosophical traditions for thousands of years. However, with the additional aid of McGilchrist's neuroscience, I will narrow my attention to some of the thinkers who sustain contemporary body studies debates, such as James, Simondon, Whitehead, Deleuze and Guattari, and, of course, Spinoza, who provides the chief theoretical structure for the present study.

In what follows I will show that, differently from some extant interpretations, rather than yielding a sterile, flat, and one-dimensional approach to our embodied condition, the process-oriented ontologies shared by these theorists appear to offer a theoretical framework able to account for the complexities, nuances, and paradoxes involved in the study of the body. In this way, they maintain an emphasis on the open-ended and relational mode I dubbed the Becoming without, however, neglecting the fictive yet instrumental mode of differentiation and individuation I named the Being. Hence, all these thinkers are, once more, ontologically monist and yet epistemologically pluralist.

7.2 Two Modes of Getting to Know and Acting in the World

The idea that we can experience and engage with the world in two main different ways has a very long transcultural history which cannot be surveyed here. In the Daoist tradition, for example, this appears to be best exemplified by a yin (Becoming) and yang (Being) way to get to know and act in the world (Wang, 2012). In the West, we can find similar distinctions between dichotomous and non-dichotomous ways of getting to know and acting in the world in Heraclitus, Aristotle, and Plato (Pieper, 2009/1963). Closer in time to us, the scholastic tradition of the Middle Ages distinguished between two main forms of knowledge: *ratio* and *intellectus*. The following

description of this medieval distinction provided by philosopher Josef Pieper (2009/1963: 28, original emphasis) strikingly resonates with what I have been taught and told by Brian (see chapter 7.1) in relation to yang and yin modes of embodiment:

> *Ratio* is the power of discursive, logical thought, of searching and examination, of abstraction and drawing conclusions. *Intellectus*, on the other hand, is the name for the understanding in so far as it is the capacities of *simplex intuitus*, of that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye. The faculty of man, man's [sic] knowledge, is both of these things in one, according to antiquity and the Middle Ages, simultaneously *ratio* and *intellectus*; and the process of knowing is the action of the two together. The mode of the discursive thought is accompanied and impregnated by an effortless awareness, the contemplative vision of the *intellectus*, which is not active but passive, or rather receptive, the activity of the soul in which it conceives that which it sees […]

Pieper's account highlights the intertwinement and ultimately fictive analytical distinction between these two modes and hints at the desirability of an integration between the two. Moreover, it makes clear that intellectus is an effortless and receptive (rather than 'passive', a term which, I would argue, can be misleading in this instance) manner of knowing and engaging with the world.

In a similar fashion, philosopher Maria Zambrano believes a split occurred in the post-Platonic West between the way of knowing and acting of the poet and that of the philosopher. In short, the poet understands the world in a non-dichotomous/direct manner and according to a non-linear/circular logic, while the philosopher does so in a dichotomous/detached fashion by employing a linear either/or logic. According to Zambrano (2009):

> [There are] two sides of man [sic]: the philosopher and the poet. The whole person is not found under philosophy; the totality of the human is not found with poetry. In poetry we directly encounter the concrete, individual human. In philosophy the human in his universal history, in its wish to be. Poetry is encounter, mastery, discovery through grace. Philosophy searches, inquiry guided by a method […]

Poetry, amidst everything, pursued the scorned multiplicity, the under-appreciated heterogeneity […] With this we touch upon the perhaps most delicate point of all: that which derives from the consideration, 'unity-heterogeneity.'

The philosopher wants oneness, because he wants everything, we have said. And the poet does not want precisely everything, for fear that in this all not every one of the things and their matrices are in play; the poet wants one, but each one of the things without restriction, without abstraction nor any renunciation. He wants a whole in which each thing is possessed, furthermore not understanding by "thing" a unity built on subtractions. A thing for a poet is never the conceptual object of thought, but instead the very complex and real thing, the phantasmagoric and dreamed thing, the invented, that which was and that which will never be. He wants reality, but the poetic reality is not simply what there is, what exists; but instead what is not; it balances being and nothingness in admirably charitable justice, for everything, everything has the right to be until it cannot be any more […]

What they would never agree upon would be the method. Poetry is unmethodical, because it wants everything at the same time […] It wants both things at once. It does not distinguish, just as it cannot distinguish between being and appearance. It does not distinguish because it does not decide, because it does not decide to choose, to split anything: neither the appearances, of being; nor the things that exist, from their origins; nor its own being from where it might emerge.

Hence, Zambrano hints at a dual character of the embodied agent, emphasises the tension between unity and heterogeneity in our knowledge of the world (or monism and pluralism, in this study's terms), and grants the ontological primacy to the poet's experience in contrast with the philosopher's fictive yet instrumental engagement with the world.

That said, I wish however to dwell a little longer on a contemporary account of these two modes of embodiment as it associates two ways of getting to know and acting in the world to the actual/material structure of the body. This is provided in the book *The Master and His Emissary* by McGilchrist (2010/2009), who, by noticing the structural asymmetry of our brain hemispheres, sustains that we attend, apprehend, and engage with the world by continuously switching between

two different but interdependent modes: one is pre-reflective, non-representational, immediate, and lived – this is the world of the right hemisphere (the Becoming); the other is reflective, representational, mediated, detached – this is the world of the left hemisphere (the Being).

Significantly, for McGilchrist (ibid.), these two forms of knowledge are two ways of being in the world – two different types of engagement between the embodied agent and the world. In fact, if one bears in mind that, according to the phenomenological tradition, the hyphens signify the intimate relationship between the terms 'being', 'in', and 'world' (see chapter 3.4), it is tempting to say that one mode is a way of 'being-in-the-world' and the other a way of 'being in the world' – indeed, according to McGilchrist (ibid.), the former mode is a world of 'betweenness', the latter is not. Therefore, as "there is, literally, a world of difference between the two hemispheres" (ibid.: 2), phenomenologically speaking, the embodied agent inhabits two different worlds thus possessing a dual character.

Importantly, however, here we do not have a reductionist or dualist argument of the like of 'one hemisphere does emotion while the other language', 'one is irrational and the other rational', or worse, 'one is feminine and the other masculine'. Rather, carefully avoiding these pitfalls as well as sharp divides, McGilchrist argues that both hemispheres are involved in any type of experience or function. For McGilchrist (ibid.: 463) "the hemispheres are evolutionary twins: they display a remarkable degree of apparent overlap or redundancy of function". Nevertheless, there seems to be a subtle yet crucial difference between them which is not to be found in the 'what' but in the 'how'.

In McGilchrist's (ibid.: 174-175, original emphasis) words:

> The left hemisphere is always engaged in a *purpose*: it always has an end in view, and downgrades whatever has no instrumental purpose in sight. The right hemisphere, by contrast, has no designs on anything. It is vigilant for whatever is, without preconceptions, without a predefined purpose […] The world of the left hemisphere, dependent on denotative language and abstraction, yields clarity and power to manipulate things that are known, fixed, static, isolated, decontextualized, explicit,

disembodied, general in nature, but ultimately lifeless. The right hemisphere, by contrast, yields a world of individual, changing, evolving, interconnecting, implicit, incarnate living beings within the context of the lived world, but in the nature of things never fully graspable, always imperfectly known – and to this world it exists in a relationship of care. The knowledge that is mediated by the left hemisphere is knowledge within a closed system. It has the advantage of perfection, but such perfection is bought ultimately at the price of emptiness, of self-reference. It can mediate knowledge only in terms of a mechanical rearrangement of other things already known. It can never really 'break out' to know anything new, because its knowledge is of its own representation only. Where the thing itself is 'present' to the right hemisphere, it is only 're-presented' by the left hemisphere, now become an *idea* of a thing. Where the right hemisphere is conscious of the Other, whatever it may be, the left hemisphere's consciousness is of itself.

Accordingly, the degree of predominance of one hemisphere in a particular experience will subtly influence *how* such experience is lived out. In McGilchrist's (ibid.: 10, original emphasis) words:

[*A*]*t the level of experience*, the world we know is synthesised from the work of the two hemispheres, each hemisphere having its own way of understanding the world – its own 'take' on it. This synthesis is unlikely to be symmetrical, and the world we actually experience, phenomenologically, at any point in time is determined by which hemisphere's version of the world ultimately comes to predominate.

When the first of these two modes predominates, we experience the world in a non-dichotomous way – according to the Becoming mode of embodiment. That is, we experience and conceive of the world as open-ended, where things are not known as separate entities, and a sense of connectedness of all things, and engagement with the surrounding environment, prevails (ibid.). This is a dynamic and living world of paradoxes and care (ibid.). This is indeed the 'default' manner through which we experience the world – i.e., the way which is significant every time we are *not* focusing our attention on something in particular and/or employing our reflexive capacities (ibid.).

171

When we switch towards the second mode, we experience the world as a structure – this is the mode of embodiment of the Being. That is, we experience and conceive of the world as made up by individuated and separated entities – this is a static and lifeless world of either/or linear logic and manipulation (ibid.). This is a disembodied, decontextualised, instrumental, mechanic, and objectified world, which provides us with 'a view from above' (ibid.). This mode of experience clearly has some advantages. As McGilchrist (ibid.: 21) observes:

> [O]ur ability to stand back from the world, from our selves, and from the immediacy of experience […] enables us to plan, to think flexibly and inventively, and, in brief, to take control of the world around us rather than simply respond to it passively.

This is the mode of experience which is salient in this very moment, when both I and the reader are distinguishing between categories such as those of the Becoming, the Being, the linear logic, and the circular logic, which, albeit useful and functional, are ultimately fictive – and, of course, one of the chief contentions of the current study is that such functionality should warn against the neglect of these categories.

Significantly, the acknowledgment of *both* the fictivity *and* functionality of this mode of experience appears to be among the core concerns of McGilchrist (ibid.). In fact, McGilchrist identifies the right hemisphere with the master of his book title, while the role of the emissary is played by the left hemisphere: the master needs her emissary to be able to rule the vast land she possesses. Yet, McGilchrist (ibid.) argues, if the emissary abuses the power granted to him by his master, the master's prosperous domain is likely to fall apart. In this respect, mistaking the emissary for the master is not too dissimilar from mistaking instructions for an end rather than a means within the Daoist tradition – in any case, if one acts as a master but is in fact an emissary, or, if one reifies the mode of the Being at the ontological level, whether it is a vast domain or a DIA practice, it will end up in ruins.

The underpinning morale of the metaphor is that it is the world of the right hemisphere which characterises the fundamentally relational and embodied nature of human beings[14]. As McGilchrist (ibid.: 460) points out, even within the scientific enterprise – perhaps the most evident example of the functionality of the experiential dimension of the Being – one cannot exclusively rely on this mode of knowledge. In fact, to be able to advance their innovative theorising, remarkable scientists, such as Einstein, Bohr, Planck, Heisenberg, and Bohm, had to move beyond a linear either/or logic and access a paradoxical type of thought (ibid.).

Hence, consistent with the Daoist tradition, McGilchrist (ibid.: 176, original emphasis) grants the ontological primacy to the Becoming without, however, neglecting the importance of the Being:

> [T]he relationship between the hemispheres is not equal, and while both contribute to our knowledge of the world, which therefore needs to be synthesised, one hemisphere, the right hemisphere, has precedence, in that it underwrites the knowledge that the other comes to have, and is alone able to synthesise what *both* know into a usable whole.

Of course, McGilchrist is not explicitly envisaging a theoretical framework constituted by two main dimensions with one enveloping the other, nor is he conceptualising embodiment as possessing a dual character. Nevertheless, his arguments appear to strongly resonate with those of the current research. This appears especially evident when he suggests that the two brain hemispheres and the two related modes of embodiment reflect the character of the world we live in, and, indeed, of our embodied condition. In the conclusion of his book, McGilchrist (ibid.: 460) asserts:

> I believe our brains not only to dictate the shape of the experience we have of the world, but are likely themselves to reflect, in their structure and functioning, the nature of the universe in which they have come about.

---

[14] Interestingly, mirroring a dominant discourse in DIA envisaging a prevalence of a yang mind in Western contexts, McGilchrist views our culture as dominated by the left hemisphere. In turn, these contentions resonate with Heidegger's arguments on the contemporary predominance of instrumental rationalism and Elias' rationalisation of bodies (see chapter 6.1).

As shown below, however, DIA instructors', Pieper's, Zambrano's, and McGilchrist's observations find a more explicit expression in the contentions of philosophers often evoked in contemporary body studies such as James, Simondon, Whitehead, Deleuze and Guattari, and Spinoza – below I will employ the former thinkers to support the arguments of the latter, who offers the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis.

7.2.1 Spinoza's Finite and Infinite Modes

Spinoza's worldview entails the existence of only one substance, which is neither physical/material nor mental/immaterial, and which is identified by the Dutch philosopher as God or Nature. By expressing itself, this one substance gives rise to the plurality of all beings (Deleuze, 2013/1992). Thus, far from proposing a sterile, flat, and one-dimensional form of monism, the Dutch philosopher provides a sophisticated account of the plurality involved in the expression of this one substance and of human embodiment. However, his pluralist account is grounded in a fundamental distinction between two chief modes reflecting two ways of getting to know and acting in the world. Indeed, as will become clearer later, Spinoza's (1996/1994) project of human emancipation aims at a shift from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment, and at the achievement of a higher-order degree of capacities for agency for the embodied agent.

Throughout Spinoza's writings, these modes have been called various names: 'substance and mode', 'creator and creature', '*natura naturans* and *natura naturata*', or 'essence and expression' (Hallett, 1957). However, I will refer to them here as *infinite mode* and *finite mode*, which appears to be the terminology often employed by Spinozian scholars and by Spinoza (1996/1994) himself in his magnum opus, *The Ethics*. In the terminology I am employing in this study, the non-dichotomous mode I name the Becoming is Spinoza's infinite mode, whereas the dichotomous mode I call the Being is the finite mode. Moreover, one of these two modes – the infinite mode/Becoming, envelops the other – the finite mode/Being.

That is, the immanent infinite mode/Becoming possesses an ontological primacy, while it is within the dimension of the finite mode/Being that the multidimensionality of our phenomenal world

unfolds, including the two experiential dimensions of mind and body, which Spinoza calls attributes: the attribute of *Thought* and the attribute of *Extension*. These attributes, however, have an instrumental yet fictive character as they are only two ways we get to know what is only one substance, which is in fact neither mental nor physical. It is in this way that Spinoza is able to be epistemologically pluralist, as he addresses the richness and multidimensionality of our lived experience, and ontologically monist, as such pluralism is ultimately enveloped within only one immanent dimension.

Resonating with the Daoist Taijitu (see chapter 5.5), Merleau-Ponty's chiasm (see chapter 3.4), or Massumi's virtual turning into actual (see chapter 4.2), for Spinoza the plurality of all beings *is* the actuality, self-actualisation, or self-determination of the one substance. As explained by philosopher Harold Hallett (1957: 29, original emphasis), "[t]he two poles of divine creation, *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata* are indiscerptible, though not co-ordinate, transeunt, or alternative. *Natura naturata* is dependent upon and subordinate to *Natura Naturans*, which necessarily actualizes itself as *Natura Naturata*". In other words, the two Spinozian modes are characterised by a "duality in unity" (ibid.: 10).

Hence, consistent with a relational theoretical framework, and despite their asymmetry, each mode can only be explained by resorting to the other – i.e., the Becoming can only be understood by referring to the Being and vice versa. Indeed, one of the main aims of Spinoza is precisely that of accounting for the finite mode by locating (or enveloping) it within the infinite mode (ibid.). Reiterated in the current study's terms, one of the chief Spinozian concerns is to conceptualise processes of individuation within a process-oriented ontology where all things emerge out of their interrelation. In this way, Spinoza's theorising not only resembles Nishida's Basho theory, but it also shares a common ground with James', Simondon's, and Whitehead's accounts.

For instance, like Spinoza's one and the same substance, *pure experience* is seen by James (1996/1912, see also Stenner, 2011) as an immanent principle, neither material nor immaterial – a primordial, undifferentiated, chaotic, and pre-individual experiential flux, within which it evolves

the pluralism of more differentiated, ordered, and individuated phenomenological fields. In this way, for the American philosopher all dualisms are grounded in a wider relational framework – i.e., they are enveloped in a non-dichotomous context. As James (1996/1912: 10) asserts, "'thought' and 'thing' – that dualism […] is still preserved in this account, but reinterpreted, so that, instead of being mysterious and elusive, it becomes verifiable and concrete". Again in the words of philosopher Russell Duvernoy (2016: 439):

> James's positing of radical empiricism gives a new form to the perennial problem of the relation between thoughts and things, reconceptualising it within a field of pure experience. Relations within this field are events or processes that are constitutive of both 'subjective' and 'objective' moments. This speculative hypothesis poses the relation in a new way and thus emphasizes differently what explanations are owed. The chief question now becomes how to account for individuation within the field of pure experience.

Similarly, Simondon's (1992: 297-298, original emphasis) main concern is given away by the title of one of his best-known essays, *The Genesis of the Individual*, where he argues against "*an ontological privilege to the already constituted individual*". That is, to understand how the individual (and the world) is constituted, rather than taking the individual itself (the Being) as a point of departure, à la Descartes, Simondon intends to start from the wider processes from which individuation is generated (the Becoming). In Simondon's (1992: 311, original emphasis) words:

> *Instead of grasping individuation using the individuated being as a starting point, we must grasp the individuated being from the viewpoint of individuation, and individuation from the viewpoint of preindividual being.*

Using 'being' and 'becoming' in the opposite way I utilise the terms, for Simondon (1992: 311, original emphasis):

> What one assumes to be a *relation* or a *duality of principles* [e.g., mind-body, subject-object, individual-collective etc.] is in fact the unfolding of the being [the Becoming], which is more than a unity and more than an identity; becoming [the Being] is a dimension of the being [the Becoming].

Here, rather than being dismissed, in Simondon's theorising the subject-object relation and the individual are located and accounted for within the broader context of which they originate. In this way for Simondon (2006/2001) individuation *is* being part of a collective – indeed, the more one is part of a collective the more one is individuated. Mirroring the relationship between the Becoming and the Being, here the collective is constitutive of the individual and individuation *is* a process of self-determination of the collective (ibid.). Far from yielding an individualistic account, Simondon's (1992: 300, original emphasis) "[i]ndividuation […] not only brings the individual to light but also the individual-milieu dyad […] *Thus, individuation is here considered to form only one part of an ontogenetic process in the development of a larger entity*".

Simondon's contentions bear an evident resemblance with the re-reading of Alfred North Whitehead provided by Stenner (2008), who contends that the employment of a process-oriented ontology and an anti-Cartesian stance does not require the jettisoning of the individual and her phenomenal world. Stenner (2008: 93) critiques certain interpretations of Whitehead's philosophy advanced by contemporary new materialist/affect theorists and observes that "[i]n recent 'radical' social theory, it seems the baby of subjectivity is at risk of being thrown out with the bathwater of representationalism". Reiterated in the words of media and cultural theorist Lisa Blackman (2008: 138, original emphasis), "we would still be wise to retain the importance of attending to the concept of *subjectivity*, which refers to the ways in which individual subjects attempt to 'hang together' a coherent sense of self in the face of multiplicity".

It is true, Stenner (2008) argues, that for Whitehead the subject-object relation is ultimately a duality in unity enveloped in a process-oriented ontology. It is also true that within such theoretical landscape each term of the relation cannot exist without, and thus cannot be privileged on, the other (ibid.). Nevertheless, it is equally true that for Whitehead (1933/1935, in Stenner, 2008: 92) "the subject–object relation is the fundamental structure of experience". For the English philosopher, rather than being an epiphenomenon, our lived experience *is* what brings about creativity, novelty and thus change in the world (Whitehead, 1985/1978; see also Stenner, 2008,

2011). For Whitehead (1985/1978: 167), "apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness".

Allowing for infinite multiplicities and intertwined levels of existence, but always faithful to our lived experience's phenomenology, Whitehead's (1968/1938: 69-70) analysis begins with two main modes he calls 'the type of actuality' (the Being) and 'the type of pure potentiality' (the Becoming):

> [M]odes of reality require each other. It is the task of philosophy to elucidate the relevance to each other of various types of existence. We cannot exhaust such types because there are an unending number of them. But we can start with […] two types which to us [are] seen as extremes; and can then discern these types as requiring other types to express their mutual relevance to each other.
>
> I do not affirm that these two types are fundamentally more ultimate, or more simple, than other derivative types. But I do maintain that for human experience, they are natural starting points for the understanding of types of existence.
>
> The two types in question can be named respectively 'The Type of Actuality', and 'The Type of Pure Potentiality'.
>
> These two types require each other, namely actuality is the exemplification of potentiality, and potentiality is the characterization of actuality, either in fact or in concept.
>
> Also the interconnections of the two extreme types involve the introduction of other types, namely type upon type, each type expressing some mode of composition.

Stressing both the functionality and fictivity of a dichotomous mode, Whitehead is motivated "to generate a viable concept of 'entity' which […] does not preclude entities also being functions" (Stenner, 2011: 103), and envisages a psychophysical reality which avoids "reducing the universe to 'discourse' and 'materiality'" (Stenner, 2008: 106) and where our experience "is the becoming of objective reality" (ibid.: 94). Here, the self-determination of the Becoming into the Being takes place through 'experiences' – what Whitehead (1985/1978) calls 'actual occasions'.

Actual occasions are precisely those occurrences or assemblages whereby the universe is self-realising – i.e., "the final real things of which the world is made up [which although are characterised by] gradations of importance, and diversity of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies are all on the same level" (ibid.: 18). In this study's terms, actual occasions are processes of individuation – i.e., events through which the Being emerges out of the Becoming – which are therefore always located in a wider non-dichotomous context ('the same level').

As observed by Stenner (2008: 99, original emphasis), "an actual occasion is a passage from a state of *disjunctive diversity* to a state of *conjunctive unity*". In Whitehead's (1985/1978: 21) words, by means of an actual occasion "the many become one and are increased by one [by means of the] production of novel togetherness". Put another way, actual occasions are creative acts whereby novelty is brought about in the world (the world is 'increased by one') and, again in the present study's terminology, the Becoming unfolds into the Being.

Overall, James, Simondon, and Whitehead offer a pluralist and multidimensional view of our embodied condition which is however enveloped in a wider non-dichotomous and ultimately monist context. Moreover, their accounts appear to be, more or less explicitly, grounded in two chief modes of embodiment which, to evoke Whitehead once more, 'to us are seen as extremes'. Nevertheless, to obtain a more nuanced description of these two main modes of embodiment we need to refer to Deleuze and Guattari who, in turn, lead us back to Spinoza.

Drawing on Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari (2013/1988) identify the finite mode/Being and the infinite mode/Becoming respectively as two plan(e)s: *the plan(e) of organisation* (or development, or transcendence) and *the plane of consistency* (or composition, or immanence). However, following Spinoza, it is within the plane of consistency that the plan(e) of organisation unfolds. Hence, as put by Deleuze and Guattari (2013/1988: 309), rather than two planes, there is in fact only one plane, and thus it would be more correct to talk of "two ways of conceptualising the plane" – or, seen from the perspective of this study, the plane of consistency (the Becoming) envelops the plan(e) of organisation (the Being).

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2013/1988), the plan(e) of organisation (the Being) is the plane of forms and static structures where we can distinguish between discrete 'things' which can retain their organisation and identity over time. This is the dimension of individuation, reflection, closed systems, and either/or logic. Conversely the plane of consistency (the Becoming) is the plane of pre-individual, formless, and dynamic events, where every 'thing' is interconnected with other 'things' within a process of continuous transformation, and where the terms of a relation do not pre-exist their interrelating – this is a pre-reflective, non-representational, and open-ended dimension where the logic of paradox is salient (see also Deleuze, 2013/1992).

Like DIA instructors, Deleuze and Guattari utilise dozens of metaphors, analogies, and examples to develop their arguments. In relation to time, for instance, 'Chronos' is the linear time of the Being, "the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject" (ibid.: 305). 'Aeon', instead, is the circular time of the Becoming, "the indefinite time of the event, […] that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened" (ibid.: 305).

A further metaphor is that of the tree and the rhizome – the tree represents the Being, the rhizome the Becoming. The former has a linear and genealogical structure with a beginning and an end. Without following any linear or genealogical unfolding, the latter lacks a definable structure, and is distributed across 'things'. The tree tends to reproduce its structure. The rhizome lacks any structure or pattern, and thus is disseminated in virtually infinite directions, cutting across the discrete 'things' of the Being. In Deleuze and Guattari's (ibid.: 26) words, "[t]he tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb 'to be', but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and…and…and…'".

Significantly for the present research, West and East provide a further analogy. Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.) note that the model of the tree has dominated Western cultural models, while that of the rhizome Eastern thought. To remain within botany, for example, according to Deleuze and

Guattari (ibid.: 18-19), the West has privileged the forest and the field, while the East, the steppe and the garden. Following a linear logic, in terms of sexuality, the West appears to be orgasmic and reproductively oriented. In the Eastern conception, instead, sexual activity does not necessarily aim at these ends, and its energy, rather than dissipated in orgasm and reproduction, can be oriented and redirected towards other, non-sexual activities according to a circular logic (ibid.: 19). Similarly, in relation to music, Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.: 315) assert that while Western music follows the tree model and is "based on sound forms and their development", Eastern music is "composed of speeds and slowness, movement and rest".

Even more pertinent to the current study is the analogy made by Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.: 2, 34, 46-49) between an organism and a Body without Organs (BwO). At the level of the Being/tree/plan(e) of organisation, the body is an organism, a structured, self-organised system, with a form, a substance and a linear/genealogical development – here the body is a Being. At the level of the Becoming/rhizome/plane of consistency, the body is a Body without Organs, an unstructured, open-ended system, formless, an unsubstantial process, not following any linear/genealogical development – here the body is a Becoming. Resembling Frantzis' observation on the unattainability of absolute emptiness (see chapter 7.1), for the French thinkers the BwO is an idealised notion, in the sense that it is never fully knowable or achievable – in Deleuze and Guattari's words (ibid.: 174), "[y]ou never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit".

While when interpreting Spinoza's arguments Deleuze and Guattari envisage two main modes/planes, the fact that usually only one of them – the plane of consistency (the Becoming) – is most often cited in contemporary social theory and body studies well reflects the over-emphasis on the open-ended dimension of embodiment (for the importance of considering both planes in Deleuze's thought, see Lundy, 2012). Yes, certainly, Deleuze and Guattari (and Spinoza, James, Simondon, and Whitehead) intend to stress the ontological primacy of the non-dichotomous plane of consistency and, above all, reject the Cartesian, positivist, and cognitivist paradigm, where the

181

tables are turned upside down and it is the dichotomous plan(e) of organisation which is reified at the ontological level.

However, following Stenner (2008; see also Burkitt, 1999), I contend that if not re-contextualised within a post-Cartesian ontology, this just emphasis risks producing a flat perspective of embodiment, rather than accounting for its multidimensional character – once again, both modes need to be included in a non-reductionist account. In this respect, while the present research subscribes to the view according to which the world we live in, including human embodiment itself, has an ultimately relational character, it also recognises that 'things' can acquire distinct identities and that, within an individuated dimension, the embodied agent is able to exercise a degree of agency and power of acting in the world, and therefore bring about change and novelty.

In this light, taking into consideration the body as a self-organising system and the subject's inner life – in the current study's terms, taking into account also the dimension of the Being – does not necessarily imply a Cartesian, cognitivist, or individualistic worldview. Hence, an emphasis on the Becoming does not need to be equated to the disregard of the Being. It is on these premises that I suggest that once we have firmly grounded our theorising of embodiment within the process-oriented ontology of the Becoming, the next step needs to be a meaningful re-conceptualisation of the Being in a non-dualist manner. We need, in other words, to move from a mere anti- to a post-Cartesian perspective.

This is an extremely ambitious endeavour, which entails neither conflating differences nor falling into the Cartesian person. As noted by Duvernoy, following Spinoza, Deleuze intended to answer "the question of how to account for individuated experience without relying on the ontological givenness of the subject" (2016: 429), and therefore "[s]ince we cannot appeal to the essential givenness of subjects or objects, we have to find a different way of accounting for conventional experience of their existence and stability" (2016: 438). While, of course, this study does not aim at providing a definite answer to this ultimate philosophical conundrum, it however intends to offer a strategy – namely that of enveloping all dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context – which

can help us to pragmatically deal with our sociological concerns and ameliorate our understanding of how the phenomenology of a number of relationships we keep on encountering in contemporary body studies come to be and change.

To provide a contribution towards this aim, in what follows I will analyse how the strategy of enveloping all dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context is pragmatically implemented by both DIA practitioners and Spinoza. I will show that the analytical distinctions/experiential dimensions between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational, are employed in an instrumental way to understand, and make a difference to, the dynamics involved in our embodied condition. My endeavour will begin with the mind-body relationship – first contextualised within DIA training, and then examined through a Spinozian lens.

Chapter 8: THE PRINCIPLE OF MIND-BODY CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Merging Mind and Body

In the words of Brian, the 'merging of mind and body is the first step' in DIA training. Reiterated in the present research's terms, the first step towards the shift from the Being to the Becoming is to attune the experiential dimensions of mind and body so that they can turn from dualism(s) to a duality in unity. This is very different from a typical Western training where the active mind acts upon the passive body. Countless times I have heard Brian saying that 'the mind cannot tell the body what to do' – a statement which might seem disorienting, but which, nevertheless, is fundamental in DIA training. Indeed, in DIA analytical distinctions like mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, or the representational and the non-representational are all employed in a peculiar way.

Faithful to a conceptual landscape which is ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist, while the two terms of the above relationships are considered ontologically inseparable, they are instrumentally used in training at the epistemological level. In practical terms, and in line with Porkert's view of TCM as a medicine of systematic correspondences (see chapter 5.5), this means that for the DIA practitioner the above relationships are conceptualised in terms of a principle of dynamic correspondence, rather than an interaction. With regard to the mind-body relationship, this entails that what occurs on the physical dimension of the body has a correspondence on the mental dimension of the mind, and vice versa – both dimensions possess causal power here.

Yet, this principle of correspondence is not fixed, but rather dynamic and amenable to change at the phenomenological level, where the fundamental unity of the terms constituting these relationships can be experienced as more or less salient – the former option is that sought by the DIA practitioner. Once again in the present study's terms, DIA aim at bringing about a phenomenological shift from dualism(s) to dualities in unity (see also Yuasa in chapter 6.1).

Consistent with the above, DIA training involves both mind and body. That is, on the one hand, the target of the training is the "physical body [which] is considered a tower to the heavens, a ladder to the heavenly realms" (Neigong.net, 2016a). On the other, however, lived experience, mind, and cognition are fundamental in DIA as "the movement of the body comes from mind cultivation" (Neigong.net, 2016b). Therefore, while it seems clear that DIA are not about 'the mind telling the body what to do', at the same time, the body does not appear to replace the mind as the privileged term of the relationship. In other words, there is no inverse Cartesianism here, and the mind and our phenomenological world are never reduced to an epiphenomenon.

In fact, at the beginning of my explorations of DIA I was a little puzzled: the training focus was at times falling on the mind while other times on the body – but which one plays the chief role? As Brian appeared elusive when I asked for clarifications on the matter, to obtain a more satisfactory answer, I took advantage of an interview with another DIA instructor – Danielle. Below Danielle exposes the limitations of my either/or linear reasoning and makes clear the principle of correspondence between mind and body: what occurs at the physical and material level has a correspondence on the mental and affective level and vice versa:

> Vittorio: Er um... another thing I found quite tricky, erm… is er that with all these practices they s-, stress of course on the body. <Pause>
>
> Danielle: Mm.
>
> Vittorio: But then this also, then, you know, these things, they… <tut> w-, I mean I don't know how to say, I found it quite a bit of er um, something I'm really, it's really unclear to me because you're targeting the body, you know, this, this focus… starting with the body, but then it's all about the mind.
>
> Danielle: Yeah!
>
> Vittorio: Because it's the mind directing the chi…eventually.
>
> Danielle: Mm. Yeah, yeah. <chuckles>

Vittorio: So I found it a bit of a contradiction, you know, it, it's about the body, it's about the mind…

Danielle: Again I think that's, that's again er like a bit of a Western separation.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Danielle: So you have the body and the mind as separate entities so they have like a doctor that deals with the body, they have the doctor that deals with the mind.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Danielle: And I think in the East they don't have this kind of distinct separation. And if you think about it, anything that your, is happening in your head will affect you physically so if you're stressed out maybe you start to lift your shoulders. There are various things. If something… something bad happens to you then it's almost like you can build up an armour, like you might tense a certain muscle and hold yourself in a certain way, it's almost like a kind of protection, and then I think doing the physical work erm can just loosen it off and then that will affect the emotion in the, the head as well. So that's why I think it's kind of intrinsically linked with the, the mind and the body erm… so it's things that you might not even notice, you, you don't notice yourself but then you're doing the exercises, you might start to notice a blockage in a certain place and then working on that using your chi or doing some practical exercises can help to release that erm… and then it does, it does have a profound effect on the, the emotions as well, to… once you start to, to deal with those blockages then it just smoothes it out a lot more, so you're not getting these like intense emotions where you know, kind of anger, despair, like [inaudible], you can… it's almost like you can roll with the punches. So you know, if something's happening but you know, you've still got your root into the ground.

Vittorio: Yeah, yeah.

Danielle: That's another sense, that [inaudible] good, like this, this rooted down, so the feeling that you're connected and that something will come towards you and it's not going to … you know, knock you over in a practical or mental sense.

Clearly, as it can direct the chi, the mind does not play a marginal epiphenomenal role here – conscious awareness is key in DIA. Yet, not conceptualising mind and body in a hierarchical manner or as separate entities does not entail the conflation of the two dimensions. That is, in DIA there is also a clear acknowledgment that the material and immaterial experiential dimensions possess different properties. For instance, as pointed out by DIA instructor Bill Ryan (2008), the immaterial mind can move much faster than the material body:

> [T]he energy of your mind moves very fast. You can move your mind across the room incredibly quickly. You can look at and think about one corner of the room and then in an instant jump your mind across the room and think about the other corner.

> You can't move your physical body across the room so quickly.

Ryan's observations resonate with Brian's numerous calls to slow down the mind to the same speed as the body – i.e., to attune mind and body. Thus, while there seems to be no ontological distinction between two 'things' which happen at the same time – i.e., one cannot occur without the other – there is nevertheless a stress on the importance of distinguishing between them at the epistemological level. That is, we have the employment of a linear logic and of the related analytical categories as a pragmatic tool within the ontological primacy of a paradoxical logic – all dualisms are enveloped in a wider non-dualist context. Once again, we are here in a conceptual landscape which is ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist.

The phenomenology of the mind-body attunement sought by DIA practitioners is well described by Catherine below. Additionally, she is aware of the metaphor of the Cartesian Theatre (see chapter 1.1), and employs it to describe the disembodied/detached mode of embodiment of the Being, where mind and body feel separate. The latter instance, Catherine makes clear, is very different from the mind-body integration and expanded awareness of the Becoming which she previously described (see chapter 7.1):

> Catherine: I think actually it [Tai Chi training] did cause me to develop a different awareness erm… that I hadn't had before… it kind of it, it felt as though I now had a much more sophisticated way of

being aware of what was going on in my body. It was sort of more fine detail or less blockages between it and me. When I say it and me, that implies a duality that was kind of beginning to disappear… but… if you want another metaphor, the sort of before… I started doing it, it kind of felt as though erm… the mind is sort of a pilot sitting in a cockpit sort of pulling on the levers –

Vittorio: Yeah.

Catherine: - of a slightly crap kind of metal rod.

Vittorio: The typical Cartesian, typical kind of metaphor.

Catherine: Yeah, exactly, like sitting in the Cartesian Theatre like piloting a sort of big, mechanical robot which has not very responsive controls that stick and the interface gets in the way and you sort of send a message down to your legs for example, and you can't be sure whether it'll actually get through in the right form or what'll happen, and what happens will be kind of jerky and clumsy and weird. Um…

Vittorio: Yeah.

Catherine: But, sort of from that I kind of increasingly began to feel like … not just that I had fine control over my body but just that the whole system was working together.

Vittorio: Mm.

Catherine: And I was getting more feedback from er … or about body position and about the feeling of things and so on as well, so I could do course corrections on the fly, rather than just, 'Well, I'm gonna do this movement now and I hope it works'.

[…This contrasts with] when in, in the past especially when I've been doing a lot of very cerebral work I'd sometimes feel like my awareness was not even in my body at all but you know was just sort of bobbing around on a string somewhere up there like a balloon. Not in a sort of spiritual astral body sort of way.

[…] And I, in fact I wanted to make a clear distinction between the mind like a balloon bobbing around experience and the thing we were talking about a few minutes ago about the dispersed self [inaudible]

Vittorio: [inaudible] because you actually made clear it's a non-es… spiritual experience or mystical experience.

Catherine: Yeah it's not, it doesn't involve, it involves … the disembodied being in my head and outside my body doesn't involve awareness of the world around me at all. It's almost as if the consciousness sort of goes off into a totally different plane.

Vittorio: Yes.

Catherine: Whereas the kind of awareness being outside the body that we were talking about, and it's like –

Vittorio: In a way it's the opposite.

Catherine: It's being intensely present in the world.

Vittorio: Yeah. It's, in a way it, it can be seen as the opposite of –

Catherine: Yeah.

Vittorio: - this, this er…

Catherine: It's not detached, it's more attached to the world.

Catherine's arguments are reiterated by Cavel (Kleiman, 2013b):

The way the neigong is taught, you have to become present to where your knees are when you turn, otherwise your knees will twist out of alignment and you'll start to damage them over a long period of time. The same with your spine, the same with your arms. You have to hone the mind to become present and aware to your body and what it's doing in the space that you're moving. If you don't do that, you don't go very far and then you're just in the realm of visualisation and you're basically just, you know, becoming a legend in your own mind whilst you're moving your arms around.

189

What Cavel means when pointing out the possible disattunement between mind and body and the danger of becoming a legend in one's own mind is that DIA training is not about mimicking the choreography of a movement – that would be considered 'an empty form', performed according to a dichotomous mode of embodiment where mind and body are separate. Rather, it is about experiencing that particular feeling *corresponding* to the actual physical change one wishes to make in the body. When practising, the practitioner seeks a specific feeling – that feeling attached to the movement she aims to perform. In fact, I have never witnessed Brian showing us a new move without his adding 'you're looking for this feeling of…'. It is by attuning feeling and movement that the attunement of immaterial and material dimensions is obtained.

8.1.1 Feeling and Movement – The Agency of Experience

The aim of attuning feeling and movement implies the acknowledgment that the qualitative differences characterising our phenomenological world possess agentic powers and are able to bring about change also at the physical level. Put another way, here our lived experience is endowed with agency. As observed by Kleiman (2013c), by attuning feelings and movements:

> You develop a feedback loop at this stage where the more awareness you can bring to your body, the more the physical movements are amplified and at the same time, the smoother the body moves, the more the mind is calmed.

In other words, attuning feeling and movement amplifies changes on both material and immaterial dimensions. As previously argued by Ingold/SPIDER (see chapter 3.6), this is a circular dynamic which is crucial for the embodied agent's development: novel feelings bring about novel movements, which, in turn, bring about novel feelings, and so on. The following is a field note extract describing my experience of training in what in Frantzis' teaching is considered the most advanced neigong set: Gods Playing in the Clouds. I was kindly granted permission to take part in the training by Brian to help me with my research. However, in addition to my difficulties in executing the movements required, the class discussion on the subtle distinctions between different types of feelings – often called 'flavours of chi' – involved in the Gods was often beyond my

190

comprehension, as I had/have never experienced most of these feelings nor executed the attached movements in the first place:

Diary – Gods Playing in the Clouds class – 5th May 2016:

> At one point there was a discussion in the class about a specific type of 'wrapping feeling' that one should experience when standing, and somehow in a more significant manner when doing the kwa squat [a basic pelvis movement in DIA] during the Gods [Playing in the Clouds]. Brian was explaining that we needed to address 'a layer in your leg that feels slightly 'fluidy''. Someone asked if the feeling Brian was talking about was similar to the feeling attached to a particular movement present in the Wu style tai chi form (I could not grasp the name of the movement). Brian replied, 'no, that feels more 'material''.
>
> Indeed, while the rest of the class appeared to be happy with Brian's clarification, when trying to execute the movement I could not feel any layer in my legs, let alone a more 'fluidy' or 'material' feeling. Again, I seem to understand that here there is a play with a very wide range of feelings, and the range is expanded with practice. In turn, the more this range of feelings is expanded the more one is able to make changes at the physical level.

In this respect, I often heard Brian talking of 'the need to find the feeling', or the 'unity of knowledge and action'. Moreover, against a reification of a detached, disconnected, or disembodied style of knowledge (the Being), he often warned us 'to not make intellectual objects' and that 'intellectual analysis breaks things down but is not real knowledge'. Warning us of the dangers of the abstractions of the mind and of an either/or logic, he also several times invited us to engage in 'direct perception' and to 'drop the thinking and retain the feeling' so as to have access to the 'real information happening behind the words' (the Becoming). The experience, the sensation, and the feeling of a performance are therefore at the centre of the DIA training and crucial to achieve mind-body integration: "Feel it. Experience it. Don't try to figure it out", Frantzis (2012) says.

191

Similarly, Myers (Theosophical Society, 2015).) makes clear that: "Feeling is really the most important, first one to do. Can you actually feel what's happening in your body rather than just thinking about it?". This stress on the experiential aspect, however, seems to be most explicitly expressed by DIA instructor Al Simon (2016a) with his so-called Chi Fusion approach, whose "goal [is] to make [a] movement feel the same way to you as it does to a Tai Chi master". On his website Simon (2016b, original emphasis) explains:

> ChiFusion^TM *Tai Chi and Qigong* is quite different from these 'choreography' classes. We don't want your movements to 'look' like your instructor's movements. As a matter of fact, **your movements should not look like your instructor's** or anyone else's, since we all have different bodies, with different physical abilities, different strengths, and different weaknesses.
>
> In the ChiFusion^TM program we concentrate more on how your movements 'feel'. We want your movements to feel the same way to you that they feel to your instructor.

It is therefore the attunement of feelings and movements that is one of the main strategies to achieve the merging of mind and body – i.e., the shift of the mind-body relationship from dualism(s) to a duality in unity. Grounded in a principle of dynamic correspondence, this strategy avoids both an inverse Cartesianism, with the body substituting the mind as the privileged term, and a conflation of the two terms. In this way, the non-hierarchical relationship between mind and body grants agentic power also to immaterial experiential dimensions – a standpoint which can appear counterintuitive. However, in what follows I will show that the DIA's perspective on the matter is in line with Spinoza's non-hierarchical principle of mind-body correspondence according to which our immaterial experiences are not less actual than those material, and, as they too 'actualise' and make a difference in the world, they cannot therefore be thought of as epiphenomenal.

8.2 Spinoza's Psychophysical Reality

Spinoza was a younger contemporary of Descartes and it is therefore inevitable that the Cartesian perspective greatly influenced his own thought (Morgan, 2002; Shein, 2013). Employed by both philosophers, the notion of *attribute* is exemplary in this respect. According to both Spinoza and Descartes, we can experience, know and understand the world in two main distinct ways: either as Thought, i.e. immaterial minds; or as Extension, i.e. material bodies (for these phenomenological distinctions see prologue).

Yet, as is well known, beyond the common ground of the two attributes there are also fundamental differences between the two philosophers. Most notably, while for Descartes the two attributes reflect the existence of two different substances – i.e., Thought and Extension, for Spinoza there is only one substance – i.e., God or Nature. Therefore, and crucially, the chief disagreement between Descartes and Spinoza takes place on an ontological terrain, rather than at an epistemological level. Thus, ontologically, Descartes is a dualist while Spinoza is a monist; epistemologically, however, both philosophers acknowledge the experiential dimensions of Thought and Extension – two ways we experience and understand the world.

Furthermore, and similarly to what occurs in DIA training, both philosophers acknowledge that the distinction between mind and body can be experienced as more or less significant, or that mind and body can be more or less attuned. For instance, despite sustaining that mind and body are two different substances, Descartes acknowledges that the two terms can, however, be experienced in their unity. Yet, he stubbornly insists that this experience would be misleading, and that mind and body are in fact separate entities. In Descartes' (2003/1998: 135) words, "even if […] God has joined a physical substance to some such thinking substance so closely that they could not be more closely joined, and that he formed a single entity from the two substances, they are still really distinct".

Conversely, despite conceiving of mind and body as one substance, Spinoza acknowledges that mind and body can be experienced as distinct. Yet, he makes clear that this perception would be

mistaken, and mind and body are ultimately one substance. In Spinoza's (1996/1994: 6, EIP10S, original emphasis) words, "although two attributes may be conceived to be really distinct (i.e. one may be conceived without the aid of the other), we still cannot infer from that that they constitute two beings, *or* two different substances". Hence, while Spinoza acknowledges the qualitative differences between the immaterial and material experiential dimensions, he firmly rejects the Cartesian reification of two substances – why does he do so?

Spinoza was one of the first to highlight what still today is called the mind-body problem (see especially Chalmers, 1996). This problem arises from the particular account provided by Descartes (2000/1998) who, on the one hand, conceptualises mind and body as two separate substances, while on the other, recognises a causal link – an interaction – between them. According to Descartes, through the exercise of free will, the mind can act upon the body; conversely, the body influences the mind by providing sensory information, in turn processed by the mind into perceptual experience. In fact, as witness to the endurance of the Cartesian paradigm, most of us 'naturally' tend to endorse this view (and might therefore be initially puzzled if a DIA instructor explains that 'the mind cannot tell the body what to do'). Yet, it was precisely Descartes' interactionist view which Spinoza found hard to digest.

The Dutch philosopher saw the solutions proposed by the French – i.e., those of identifying the pineal gland as the locus of interaction between these two incommensurable substances and the hand of God as an additional help – as absurd (Spinoza, 1996/1994: 161-162, EVpreface). He recognised the causal interaction between an immaterial and a material world as an intractable problem (see also Velmans, 2009). From this, he advanced what today is identified as a type of dual-aspect theory: once more, there is only one infinite substance (neither material nor immaterial) which manifests itself to us according to different attributes (Thought and Extension).

Recognising the causal interaction between an immaterial and a material substance as an insoluble problem, Spinoza advances a psychophysical view of the world where the interaction between mind and body is substituted by a *correspondence*: what occurs on the material dimension of the

body has a correspondence on the immaterial dimension of the mind. In Spinoza's (1996/1994: 35, EIIP7S, original emphasis) words:

> *The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.*
>
> […T]he thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, which is now comprehended under this attribute, now under that. So also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways.

Here there is no need for any interaction as the infinite substance is only one, which is neither Thought nor Extension but, rather, expresses itself, or is comprehended by us, according to these two attributes. Put simply, to have an interaction we need at least two different things interacting – if we have only one substance, such a substance obviously cannot interact with itself. Once more, while epistemologically they can be distinct, ontologically mind and body are not two separate entities.

Importantly, Spinoza's non-interactionist move in turn yields crucial conceptual consequences of which the most pertinent to our discussion are a dramatic reassessment of the hierarchy between mind and body and a view of our experience as equal partner with the body in constructing the world. By conceptualising them in a parallel fashion, Spinoza neither sets mind and body in opposition, nor conflates the two terms, nor reduces any of them to an epiphenomenon.

In opposition to Descartes' view of the body as a mere passive object of the mind, as observed by Steven Brown and Paul Stenner (2001: 85), Spinoza "is performing an emancipatory act of awarding the body its full and proper standing in the definition of personal being". However, Brown and Stenner's observation should not lead us to conclude that Spinoza conceives of the mind as arising from the body, or that he considers the body, rather than the mind, the privileged term of the mind-body relationship. In other words, while there is no doubt that the reputation of the Dutch philosopher as emancipator of the body is merited, I would contend that to eschew what Spinoza surely intended to eschew – i.e. both the Cartesian paradigm and an inverse Cartesianism privileging the body rather than the mind – his theorising needs to be examined more carefully.

Like a DIA practitioner, Spinoza's aim is to attune mind and body, tap into the tacit knowledge of the body, and ultimately expand one's phenomenological field to access a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment – as rightly observed by Deleuze (1988: 90):

> It is not at all a matter of giving a privilege to the body over the mind; it is a matter of acquiring a knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover, in parallel fashion, powers of the mind that escape consciousness.

My contentions need to be clarified. If we conceive of mind as arising from the body, we are reasoning in terms of two different substances, with one generating the other, rather than one substance expressing itself, or being known by us, through two different attributes (Thought and Extension, or mind and body). In addition, by conceptualising the mind as a product of the body, we would merely swap the Cartesian privileged position of the mind with that of the body, and, as seen with new materialist/affective perspectives, we would fall into an inverse Cartesianism, where our consciousness becomes an irrelevant phenomenon.

Instead, to stick to Spinoza's monist ontology and principle of correspondence, and thus not set the two terms in opposition, conflate them, or privilege one polarity over the other, we need to think of mind and body as proceeding in unison – as mind arising *with* the body. Consequently, once we think of Thought and Extension as proceeding in a parallel fashion according to a circular logic, or, more pertinently, as being ultimately the same substance, it follows that, rather than bodies generating minds or minds bodies, all bodies are thinking bodies and all minds are embodied.

Put crudely, there can be no body without a mind and no mind without a body – we cannot separate Thought and Extension in the Spinozian system. As explained by philosopher Evald Ilyenkov (2014/1977: 17, original emphasis), with Spinoza we have a psychophysical view of the world where "there are not two different and originally contrary objects of investigation body and thought, but only *one single* object, which is the *thinking body*". If we do not keep this in mind, that is, if we do not ultimately transcend the specifications of mind and body (and of idealism and materialism) with the notion of only one substance neither immaterial nor material, it becomes

extremely easy to slip into a Cartesian worldview with two separate substances interacting with each other.

Instead, we need to conceive of mind and body as aspects, or experiential dimensions, characterising the mode of the Being which, however, unfolds from, or is enveloped by, the Becoming – ultimately, the only existing substance. In this thesis' terms, we need to conceive of the mind-body relationship as a duality rather than dualism(s). As reiterated by philosopher Hans Jonas (1965: 52), for Spinoza there was:

> [A]n intrinsic belonging-together of mind and matter, which gave causal preference neither to matter, as materialism would have it, nor to mind, as idealism would have it, but instead rested their interrelation on the common ground of which they both were dependent aspects.

Hence, this 'common ground', that is, the one and the same infinite substance, expresses itself as both physical and psychical, while, ultimately, being neither of them. Here the world's self-determination takes place by means of processes of individuation involving embodied agents' mind *and* body. Hence, both mind and body play an active role in the wider process of self-actualisation of the Becoming into the Being, and therefore the immaterial dimensions of feelings, affective states, and thoughts cannot be conceived of as epiphenomena.

8.2.1 The Immaterial Action of Mind

As explained by Brown and Stenner (2001: 84), Spinoza "couples movements in ideas to modifications in the body [and therefore] knowing proceeds in parallel fashion to the body's physical engagements". Therefore, implied in Spinoza's philosophical system there is the inextricable connection we saw particularly significant in DIA: this is the intertwinement between feeling and movement, or knowing and doing. Rather than representing an external world already in existence, our experience constructs the world – indeed feeling *is* moving, or knowing *is* doing. While this is a well-acknowledged paradigm across sociological and cultural studies, which we have already discussed in different guises when considering the theorising of Butler (see chapter

2.3), Massumi (see chapter 4.2), and Merleau-Ponty (see chapters 3.4 & 4.3), I believe that Spinoza makes it particularly poignant.

That is, transcending both materialism and idealism, Spinoza endows our thought and ideas with agency. Similar to DIA training, here our feelings, affective states, thoughts, ideas, and reflexive deliberations do bring about change in the world, including change at the physical level. In Brown and Stenner's (2001: 88) words:

> [A]n idea is part of mind [which] is already affirmed to some degree. [...] Human physical being consists of a 'complex body' made up by the alliance of many simple bodies. In parallel fashion, mind, as idea of the body, consists of the ideas of all these simple bodies, as well the modifications that may befall them. Thus what is 'affirmed' in an idea is some actual modification.

In this respect, Spinoza seems to be making a point which is consistent with Foucault's (see chapter 2.2) insight that ideas, concepts, and discourses are intimately implicated with the physicality of our body as well as with the wider material context in which the body is embedded – again, the psychical and the physical are intertwined (see also Barad, 2007).

Within the Spinozian psychophysical reality, as Extension has a physical energy, so Thought possesses a psychical energy (Wolf, 1972). As philosopher Abraham Wolf (ibid.: 23, see also Spinoza, 1996/1994: 58, EIIP43S) explains, "we find Spinoza protesting against the view which prevailed in his time and long afterwards that ideas are like 'mute pictures on a tablet' […], and maintaining, on the contrary, that they are active thoughts or assertions". In a similar vein, Hallett (1957: 60, original emphasis) argues that for Spinoza ideas are "mental *actions*" possessing an "intrinsic *agency*". Philosopher Lenn Goodman (2009: 625) reiterates the point when he says that:

> Consciousness is not the passive recipient of simulacra – or sentences. It actively embraces its objects. […] Spinoza all but reaches out here and shakes the word 'concept' to reawaken its deep etymological sense as the name for something grasped and captured – in, or *as*, a thought.

It is precisely because the experiential dimension of Thought is not a transcendental phenomenon (à la Descartes), but rather intimately connected to Extension, that for Spinoza it possesses agency

and thus cannot be conceived of as epiphenomenal. To be sure, this is not a matter of an active mind which tells a passive body what to do – this would take us back to the mind-body problem inherent in the Cartesian paradigm.

Rather, in perfect agreement with Brian (see chapter 8.1) Spinoza (1996/1994: 71, EIIIP2 original emphasis) argues that "[*t*]*he body cannot determine the mind to thinking, and the mind cannot determine the body to motion, to rest, or to do anything else*". Even though they can be experienced as separated, we know that thought and matter are entangled – indeed, they are one thing. Mind neither acts upon the body, nor is it acted upon by the body; rather body and mind, thought and matter, are equal partners in bringing about the world.

Although Spinoza does not go into the details provided by DIA instructors to foster the attunement of feelings and movements in order to amplify changes on both immaterial and material dimensions, it is clear that for him the mind is capable of a form of *action* – an 'immaterial action' to which, however, a 'material action' always needs to correspond. The following extract from Ilyenkov (2014/1977: 19, original emphasis) sums up the above arguments well:

> [I]f thinking is always an action performed by a natural and so by a spatially determined body, it itself, too, is an action that is also expressed spatially, which is why there is not and cannot be the *cause and effect* relation between thinking and bodily action for which the Cartesians were looking. They did not find it for the simple reason that no such relation exists in Nature, and cannot, simply because thinking and the body are not two different things at all, existing separately and therefore capable of interacting, but *one and the same thing*, only expressed by two different modes or considered in two different aspects.

In this way, any type of experience entails a change in the world, and any change in the world is a form of experience. For Spinoza, as noted by Jonas (1965: 46), "[t]he act of will and the movement of the body are one and the same event appearing under different aspects". Hence, it is not only the body, but also the mind – and thus feelings, concepts, and ideas – which can *do*.

Having said that, as the very terminology I am using for the present case study – Daoist Internal Arts – suggests, a further strategy to achieve the mind-body integration and the attunement of feelings and movements is that of focusing on the inside of the body, as opposed to external environments. It is to the relationship between internal and external environments of embodiment which I will now turn my attention. Like that between mind and body, also this internal/external distinction is enveloped in a wider non-dualist framework and conceptualised in terms of correspondence – broadening our awareness inwards expands it outwards.

Chapter 9: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS OF EMBODIMENT

9.1 Expanding Sensory Awareness

As the name Daoist Internal Arts hints at, expanding awareness into internal environments of embodiment plays a crucial role in Daoist practices. Kleiman (2012) compares the process of developing an internal sensitivity with Jan Juang to walking into a dark room and progressively increasing the amount of light available to illuminate it:

> The primary practice [of DIA] is the standing body scan, and so the experience of going through the standing practice is a little bit like walking into a dark room, and trying to shine your flashlight on all the different parts of the room. And at first you have a pretty small beam and a pretty weak signal, so you have to go right up to the wall – ha – s- go up to something really obvious in that room and shine the light right on it, and you still only see a little point. Over time, your light gets bigger and bigger, your internal awareness gets broader and broader until eventually when you do your standing practice you can turn the lights on in the house and the room lights up itself, and you're not there with the little flashlight any more, you've got-you've got wiring – haha – you've got – you can turn it on.

While it should already be clear that this internal focus avoids an over-emphasis on external environments of embodiment, I intend to show in what ways, like that between mind and body, also this internal-external relationship is characterised by a dynamic correspondence – here too, the aim is to turn this relationship from dualism(s) to a duality in unity. Consistently, and somehow counterintuitively, narrowing down the range of one's awareness within those areas Leder (1990: 36) calls 'corporeal depths' – i.e., our soft tissues, joints, bones, internal organs etc. – brings about an overall increase of the sensory capacities along with the ability to modulate them.

As a participant in a study conducted by neuroscientist and DIA practitioner Catherine Kerr (2002: 435; see also Beaupre, 2011) explains, when increasing the awareness of the inside of the body, "you actually 'expand' your sense of your body's own boundaries by extending the feeling of

relaxation out beyond the body into the space around it". As will become clearer in the theoretical account, this emphasis on internal environments of embodiment also yields emergent properties and increased capacities for agency for the embodied agent.

Kerr (Kleiman, 2014b; see also Kerr et al., 2008) reiterates the above during a radio interview with Kleiman – focusing on the internal environments of embodiment rather than an external sensory stimulus can alter the 'sensory volume knobs in the brain' and thus expand one's sensory awareness in a peculiar manner:

> Kerr: And we found in our, you know, in our first study, that people who'd practiced a lot of Tai Chi had a much better, more developed sense of touch than very normal [sic] er healthy people who were active and even h-, did walking or various sports but they did not practice Tai Chi and their tactile acuity was worse.

> […]

> Kerr: [..I]t's pretty interesting because the previous studies that had looked at the sense of touch looked at say what happens if you learn to read Braille, if you're blind, and those people also have a very developed sense of touch, but when I um thought about Tai Chi, and the folks that I tested, […] they er were not like people who read Braille. They did not train any touch sensations with their fingertips, because that's typically… when you think about um er a sensory modality or a, a sensory ability being increased, it's because there's direct practice, purposeful practice of that sensory modality, erm, and… so in Braille readers they're touching Braille all day, they're touching that rai-, those raised dots, and they get better at it than normal people, but when I talked to our Tai Chi practitioners, none of them touched anything for their training. […]

> Kerr: And so what we think our study shows is, this is really one of the first studies to show this, that just by paying attention to a sensory modality you can kind of amplify that process. You don't need to do the direct sensory training um in, you know, you don't need to do the, the, e, e, e, the, another analogy would be paying attention to sounds without hearing anything.

> […]

Kerr: […S]o this whole thing about mind and body, it's, it turns out to be a really… um subtle and complex question, because… er, when you put your mind in your body it's not exactly the same thing as training yourself to feel Braille or to feel sandpaper or these other um very sort of simple touch processes that other neuroscientists have documented. Um, when you learn, start learning to pay attention to your body um… w-, w-, the way that we're modelling it is er you're learning to, you can actually, by paying attention to your body and by paying attention to sensations in the fingers and the toes or the palms, even when you're not touching anything, that you're actually learning how to control the sensory volume knobs in the brain.

[…]

Kerr: […W]e know that Tai Chi does improve working memory and cognition in some people, so just by, our theory is that just by learning how to control this attentional spotlight on, you know, learning how to control the tightness of the focus, so you can either have an, you know, very –

Kleiman: Mhm.

Kerr: – small, pointed focus or you can have a broad focus, and learning how to be flexible in how you direct that focus.

Therefore, this focus on the internal environments of embodiment is in no way related to the Cartesian transcendental, disembodied, and cognitivist subject, nor does it have an individualistic connotation. Here the more one expands one's awareness into one's body, the more one is attached to, rather than detached from, the world. Put another way, the focus on the inside of the body is more like an opening than a closing on the world – an opening where, ultimately, the internal/external distinction disappears or, in this thesis' terms, it is turned into a duality in unity. DIA practitioner Nadine puts it well:

Nadine: I don't look at the practice as something outside of me, you know, like something I have to get to do and I make time to do it, but I want to be able to live inside the practice so that … everything is the practice.

203

> […] We are focussing on the inside and the expansion is happening without our knowledge, because as we practice, it expands the awareness…

Again, broadening awareness inwards expands it outwards – here there is an overall increase of the phenomenological field of the embodied agent. This view of the relationship between internal and external environments of embodiment as fundamentally characterised by a correspondence appears to be a further dominant discourse in DIA.

For DIA instructor Robert Tangora (2015), for example, "[w]ithin the external movements is an entire universe of internal experience and it is the internal experience which forms the foundation of Tai Chi Ch'uan and what distinguishes it from external calisthenics". Similarly, Myers (2015) explains that the Daoist body has different layers which expand both inside and outside of it:

> When you get into this area here, which is called the Eight Energy Bodies, which is the way that Taoists think of how the energy of er, of humans connect with the energy of the universe. And each one of these eight er energy bodies starts slightly deeper inside your body but extends farther out into the universe.

Again, here, in line with a non-linear/circular/paradoxical logic, it is by broadening awareness into internal environments of embodiment that one can expand her phenomenological world and access a non-dichotomous way of experiencing and acting in the world.

It is in this way that, like that between mind and body, also this internal/external distinction is enveloped in a wider non-dualist context. Once more, we are neither talking of opposition between two separate entities nor of internal/external conflations á la Bourdieu (see chapter 5.1). Rather, while the inside and outside and the embodied agent and the environment in which she is embedded are conceived of as inseparable, the distinction between the two at the experiential and analytical level is extremely significant when training. As Frantzis (2012) puts it with regard to the individual/environment relationship, "you're separate and you're not separate".

Frantzis (Energy Arts, 2017) expands on the above when explaining Dragon and Tiger, a qigong set specifically designed to address external environments of embodiment at the epistemological level, but which however resonates on internal environments too at the ontological level:

> [O]ne of the things that's very important about it [Dragon and Tiger] is this: you have an etheric field outside your body. This field that's out here is being created by what is inside your body. You have a blood vessel that's got a problem, it will show up in your etheric field. It will show up as something being messed up in your etheric field. But likewise, if you fix something in your etheric field, it will begin to heal what's inside of you and it's important to realise what's inside of you is generating that etheric field. So they're not … they're separate but from the point of view of … material reductionism, what's the proof?

Consistent with the primacy of a paradoxical logic, there *is* a distinction and there *is not* a distinction between the internal and the external – this is what, in the current study's terms, is called a duality in unity. In this way, here we have a conceptual framework which is monist at the ontological level while pluralist at the epistemological level. In this respect, the DIA practitioner's aim is to attune the two experiential dimensions and actually experience their ontological unity. Catherine's accurate phenomenological description reiterates the above well:

> Awareness kind of advances on all fronts. You don't have to be … yeah … you don't have to focus inward or focus outward […] I think sort of the idea of the boundary almost kind of becomes less important because you've kind of got this sort of area of really vivid awareness going on inside and then it sort of disperses outwards.

Again, the more one's awareness expands inside, the more it extends outside, according to a principle of correspondence, which, however, can be more or less significant at the phenomenological level. The attunement between the two dimensions yields an overall increase of the embodied agent phenomenological field as well as of the attached emergent properties. As will become clearer in the following theoretical discussion, these emergent properties also involve an increase of one's capacities for agency.

The relationship between external and internal environments of embodiment is crucial also from the present research's theoretical perspective. This is because this relationship is key to understanding in what way embodiment can be re-conceptualised so that we can retain a process-oriented and relational theoretical framework, account for an individuated dimension, and thus eschew an over-emphasis on external environments. In fact, the theoretical engagement with this relationship will elucidate in more detail what I have so far called *processes of individuation* – the processes by means of which what is fundamentally one substance expresses itself in its multiplicity or, in the present research's terms, the Becoming unfolds into the Being.

Drawing on Spinoza's conatus, and relying on the additional help of Maturana and Varela's autopoiesis, in what follows I will show that, like in DIA, within these perspectives, the relationship between internal and external environments of embodiment is characterised by a dynamic correspondence, which envelops the two terms in a wider non-dualist context. My account will begin precisely with processes of individuation.

9.2 Processes of Individuation

Processes of individuation refer to the means by which 'things' are actualised. When a process of individuation takes place, a thing or a body acquires an identity and distinguishes itself from its surrounding environment and the physical laws governing it. For Spinoza (1996/1994) the laws through which the entire physical universe can be apprehended by us are those of *motion and rest*. Hence, once a process of individuation has occurred, a body acquires its own proportion of motion and rest, which also grants it a certain degree of idiosyncrasy and agency. According to Spinoza, it is a body's own proportion of motion and rest – i.e. its organisation as a system – which constitutes its identity. In turn, for Spinoza, what makes possible the endurance of a body's organisation is its *conatus* – i.e., the principle sustaining processes of individuation.

As observed by philosopher T.M. Forsyth (1972: 14), the conatus is "the self-affirmation of God [or Nature] in us, and is at once the affirmation of the individual self as a unique expression of the

infinite divine nature and its negation as a self-centred or self-sufficient unit". Reminiscent of Grosz's (see chapter 3.3) flame, which keeps its identity despite always burning new material, while most of our cells are constantly destroyed and replaced, the conatus permits our bodies to maintain their organisation until death occurs (Saw, 1972).

However, interpreting the conatus and the distinction between the individual and the world in a cognitivist or individualistic fashion would be a serious misunderstanding of Spinoza's theory of individuation. Resembling what occurs in DIA training, such distinction does not set the embodied agent apart from the environment in which she is located in a transcendental sense – i.e., in the sense of bringing about two separated worlds, an inner and an outer dimension severed from each other. Rather, here the separation is paradoxical as the two terms are divided yet intimately united in the changes they undergo and in the novelty they bring about in the world. Here, the relationship between the embodied agent and the world is characterised by a dynamic correspondence, which envelops both terms in a wider non-dualist context.

Moreover, in line with a circular logic, the more salient this correspondence becomes or the more one is attuned with the world, the more one is individuated. In this way, for Spinoza, the embodied agent's degree of individuation reflects her power of acting – i.e., her capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies, and bring about novelty in the world. This is a form of empowerment which unites rather than separates. Indeed, agency, freedom, and emancipation for Spinoza are conceptualised in terms of attunement of the embodied agent with her surrounding environments. This attunement – i.e., this capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies – appears to bear similarities with the expansion of one's phenomenological field sought by the DIA practitioner. As argued by philosopher Martin Lenz (2017: 3, original emphasis), for Spinoza agency is a matter of "*appropriation* of the natural order: humans striving for freedom have to harmonize their biographical selves with 'natural history' and begin to take supposedly external causes as their *own reasons* for action".

Philosopher Lee Rice (1971: 652) notes that in this way, always enveloped in a wider non-dualist context, both an open-ended and an individuated dimension are accounted for:

> To be an individual is to be a center of action connected in various ways with a network of other individuals. It would be frivolous to claim that this causal connexion with others in a larger whole erases or absorbs individuals; since, on Spinoza's own example, being an individual in one's own right is a necessary condition for being so connected.

Yet, the paradoxical link between the embodied agent and the world is not spelt out in detail by Spinoza (Winkler, 2016). In fact, Spinoza tells us that the conatus is the principle underpinning processes of individuation and that acts of differentiation occur within an undifferentiated reality, but he does not explain exactly how such events – in his terms, the transitions from the infinite to the finite mode (or from the Becoming to the Being) – take place (Della Rocca, 1996; Rice, 1971; Saw, 1972). In this way, Spinoza is unable to make a more compelling case for a non-cognitivist and non-individualistic conceptualisation of the internal/external and subject/object distinction.

However, this lacuna can be compensated for by drawing on the notion of *autopoiesis*. Very much resembling Spinoza's conatus (Shaviro, 2009; Thompson, 2007), the concept of autopoiesis was advanced by Maturana and Varela (1980/1972; 1998/1987) to explain the dynamics linking the higher-order processes of individuation of life and the phenomenon of cognition, and account for processes of individuation by locating them within a relational and open-ended context.

For Maturana and Varela (1980/1972; 1998/1987: 40, original emphasis) both life and cognition stem from "an *act of distinction*" whereby out of a primordial molecular soup membranes were formed, making possible metabolic processes differentiated from the rest of the environment. Characterised by the production of an internal/external distinction, and thus by an idiosyncratic organisation in respect to those surrounding them, the first cells were formed constituting therefore higher-order degrees of individuation – i.e. autopoietic systems. Furthermore, the differentiated metabolic processes (or, in Spinozian terms, the differentiated proportions of motion and rest) of a

cell also showed a tendency to continuously re-generate their idiosyncrasy – indeed, the neologism autopoiesis means self-production (Maturana & Varela, 1972/1980).

Like the conatus, autopoiesis is a process which tends to satisfy the criteria for the maintenance of an organism's identity and its differentiation from the external environment. And, like the conatus, here the distinction between the cell and its surrounding milieu is in no way related to a cognitivist/individualistic perspective, as the cell's membrane is not setting apart the inside and outside of the cell. Here too, the cell-environment relationship is enveloped in a wider non-dualist context – in Thompson's (2007: 118) words, "autopoiesis always has to be ecologically embedded. 'Self-producing' refers to the kind of circular organization that makes the cell an individual; it does not mean that the cell makes itself apart from its environment".

This is a separation which brings together the two separated terms in a creative process enveloping both of them. In fact, Maturana and Varela contend that autopoiesis involves the *coupling* of the cell and the environment. As they explain: "we speak of structural coupling whenever there is a history of recurrent interactions leading to the structural congruence between two (or more) systems" (Maturana & Varela, 1998/1987: 75). Significantly, coupling neither implies that the organism determines the changes of the environment nor vice versa. Indeed, Maturana and Varela (1998/1987: 96, original emphasis) employ the verb 'trigger' in order to avoid the term 'determine' – a word which they only use *within* the autonomy of a closed system:

> We have used the expression 'to trigger' an effect. In this way we refer to the fact that the changes that result from the interaction between the living being and its environment are brought about by the disturbing agent but *determined by the structure of the disturbed system*.

In this way, each autopoietic system also possesses a degree of agency as the changes it goes through are not causally determined by external influences, but only by the internal organisation of the system itself. Yet, this is ultimately a form of relational agency, or, in the present research's terms, of organism-environment dynamic correspondence. Far from advancing an individualistic or determinist view of a living being, for Maturana and Varela (1998/1987: 171), "all behaviour is

a relational phenomenon […] between organisms and environment". Jonas (1965: 56-57) reiterates the above arguments well by referring back to Spinoza:

> [For Spinoza] closure as a functional whole within the individual organism is, at the same time, correlative openness toward the world; its very separateness entails the faculty of communication; its segregation from the whole is the condition of its integration with the whole […] Only by being sensitive can life be active, only by being exposed can it be autonomous. And this in direct ratio: the more individuality is focused in a self, the wider is its periphery of communication with other things; the more isolated, the more related it is.

Read through the lens of the theoretical framework endorsed by the current study, there is a cell/environment or internal/external distinction operating at the explanatory level of the Being – i.e., according to a linear logic. Yet, this distinction is enveloped within the dimension of the Becoming, where the changes which both the cell and the environment go through are coupled or correspondent – i.e., according to a circular logic. It is in this way that we can account for both a relational framework and an individuated dimension, and thus avoid the over-emphasis on external environments of embodiment present in many contemporary strands of body studies.

Moreover, the notion of autopoiesis show us that the dual character of embodiment – both open-ended and self-constitutive, or independent and dependent – is already present in the most primordial unicellular organism. In this way, the notion of autopoiesis well explicates what for Jonas (1965: 56, original emphasis) is "Spinoza's insight into the essentially dual character of the organism: its *autonomy* for itself, and its *openness* for the world". Indeed, this is the dual and paradoxical character of processes of individuation – processes according to which a monist dimension expresses its plurality and brings about novelty in the world. Explaining processes of individuation has furthermore allowed us to introduce a discussion on the capacities for agency of the embodied agent, here viewed in terms of power of acting and attunement between internal and external environments of embodiment – issues which I will get back to in chapters 11 and 12.

Therefore, both DIA's and Spinoza's conceptualisations of embodiment are able to be faithful to a non-dualist theoretical framework while nevertheless accounting for an individuated dimension. That is, both the mind-body and the internal-external relationships are enveloped in a wider non-dualist context, and their relationship is characterised by a dynamic correspondence. It is by relying on this shared ability to move beyond dualistic ways of thinking that I wish now to examine both DIA's and Spinoza's perspective of other relationships related to the mind and the body: those between language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational.

These two overlapping relationships are relevant in all the strands of body studies analysed in this thesis, as well as particularly significant in DIA training. Below I will begin with the language-corporeality relationship and will show that in DIA there is an acknowledgment that, although it can be disconnected from the material world, the symbolic world of language, concepts, and ideas nevertheless has roots in our body – the aim is always that of attuning mind and body, the mental and the physical, and thus language and corporeality.

Chapter 10: LANGUAGE AND CORPOREALITY

10.1 Incarnating Discourse

Along with mind and body, and internal and external environments of embodiment, DIA training entails the attunement also of the symbolic and corporeal dimensions of embodiment. That is, the DIA practitioner acknowledges that language can both detach us from, and address, our corporeality – the latter option is that which is sought by her. In fact, when training, the practitioner's aim is to actually incarnate Daoist discourses – as pointed out by Frantzis (2006/1993: 263), "[q]igong is not the acquisition of intellectual information, but is the process of becoming something". This is made particularly clear by medical researcher and tai chi instructor Peter Wayne (Kleiman, 2013e; see also Wayne, 2013) who, in a radio interview with Kleiman, conceives of DIA as a material manifestation of the Daoist philosophy:

> Wayne: I think we read these phrases um in the, the literature, the Asian literature and philosophy like, you know, all of us quote Lao-Tzu in 'not doing nothing is left undone,' or 'be like water,' and um or 'if you want to go to the right, first go to the left,' or 'if you want to lead, first follow.' You know, all of these make no sense…

> Kleiman: <laughs>

> Wayne: to a young person and even as an, as we age and, and have more life experience but the second you do Tai Chi <chuckles>

> Kleiman: <chuckles>

> Wayne: It, it's like a material manifestation of these principles, um. There's em, you know, it's like oh, that's what they meant, you know […W]hen you're doing the [tai chi] form, you know, if you, if you close your kwa all the way to the left, there's no place to go…

> Kleiman: <chuckles>

Wayne: … except to relax and open to the right, but sometimes going further to the left um really makes it clear that it's time to go the right um. And so, you know, I think that in, in your teaching, you, you know, if you weren't doing Tai Chi, this philosophy just wouldn't um, wouldn't penetrate as far. There's almost like a, these ideas um get embedded into the fabric of our physical body.

That Daoist philosophy needs to be incarnated is reiterated by Brian during his interview. In this respect, what Brian recalls of his experience of teaching Asian philosophy at Master level is significant. He came to the conclusion that the subject could not be taught satisfactorily by only remaining on the conceptual level of the mind – again, to fully understand Eastern philosophy, one needs to embody it. Below, our chat also exposes the limitations of the present research, which, inevitably, tends to remain on the terrain of the dichotomous mode of the Being, and can only partially convey the actual experience of the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming:

Brian: – as, s- near an expert on Chinese philosophy as we had, so <laughs> I e-, I ended up teaching it. Erm… I held on for quite a few years, erm… and it got to the point with the teaching at the university that erm… we, we can't teach Asian philosophy …by just talking about it. And you know, so you had this room full of people [the students] and you'd say, you know, philosophy from a –

Vittorio: So 'philosophy in practice', I'm actually quoting you.

Brian: Yeah, yeah.

Vittorio: 'Philosophy in practice or practice in philosophy'.

Brian: Yeah.

Vittorio: 'Physical practice of philosophy'.

Brian: Yeah, yeah, absolutely, yeah. And you'd say, you know, 'This stuff is not about thoughts in your head.'

Vittorio: Yeah.

213

Brian: And they'd write down, 'This is not about thoughts …'. And then they decide whether they, they agree with that.

Vittorio: It's what I'm doing [with my research] in a way, in a way, essentially.

Brian: But you're, you're coming at standings. So you're –

Vittorio: Yeah… yeah.

Brian: – you're engaging with it as well.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Brian: These people didn't have, they didn't have a way –

Vittorio: And then I got the problem to communicate this.

Brian: Oh absolutely, 'cause, 'cause you can't –

Vittorio: That's one of the challenges.

Brian: You can't, you can't, not unless you do it.

Vittorio: That's why I'm using drawings and try and to –

Brian: You… to, to practise any kind of Asian philosophy you have to be doing it.

In a similar fashion, in an advertising e-mail I received after subscribing to his list, Frantzis (admin@energyarts.com, original emphasis) points out the limitations of language and argues that:

> The truth is that I could never fully *explain* how Tai Chi, Qigong, and Neigong completely redesigns your internal energy matrix and creates clear energetic pathways. But we can help you *experience* these changes in your body, especially if you train with a live instructor.

Yet, while on the one hand it appears difficult to convey the experiences involved in DIA by only resorting to the symbolic world of language, on the other, it is, however, possible to evoke in the reader more familiar feelings, which resemble those of the DIA practitioner – in this way language

214

is used to reveal, rather than conceal, corporeality. As data have already shown, this is achieved in DIA by means of metaphors[15] – Jan Juang instructions, for example, include 'the feeling of lifting a hat off a coat rack' to elicit the lift of the skull off the neck bone, or the feeling of 'pulling grass or a plant out of the ground' to foster the rising up of the spine (see chapter 7.1.1).

Indeed, it is Frantzis himself who makes an argument in favour of metaphors when telling us the story of how he realised how sung (for a qualification of sung see chapter 7.1) feels. Below, the extract from one of Frantzis' (2006/1993: 114) books well summarises the dynamics involved in DIA training, where verbal communications, analogies, and metaphors (i.e., the representational) are employed to target the tacit knowledge of the body (i.e., the non-representational):

> When I first started trying to grasp the term *sung*, I did not have an easy time. In my early days of training in Taiwan, a very friendly Chinese man who was not my main teacher helped me gain a sense of what *sung* meant […] with two piles of coins. He put the first pile in a paper bag and laid a knife next to it. He said, 'You want *sung* be like money. Make body be like money'. Then he took the knife and cut the bag. The coins poured out (letting go of physical tension), fell (releasing the chi downward), separated (loosening the insides of the body), scattered over the floor and soon stopped moving (the body fully *sung*).

The use of metaphors in training is made explicit by Cavel (2017: 4) when he answers his own question: "how do Western students translate alien concepts into practical application? The link is metaphor".

It is on this ground that in DIA, language is always employed to reveal rather than to conceal. Or, put another way, the symbolic needs always to be attuned with the corporeal, rather than separated from it. In DIA the autonomy of the affective dimension stressed by Massumi (see chapter 4.3) is indeed something which is acknowledged, yet avoided. Cognition and affect, mind and body,

---

[15] I have been drawing on metaphors throughout this case study – think, for instance, of the poet and the philosopher or the master and her emissary to describe the crucial Becoming/Being experiential and analytical distinction. In fact, metaphors are foundational for our lived experience, reflexive thought, and philosophy itself (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

internal and external, and language and corporeality, are all relationships amenable to phenomenological change, and, therefore, experientially, they can be more or less significant, or, in fact, disappear altogether, the latter being the ultimate aim of DIA practices. Below, by outlining the way the concepts of linear, circular, and spherical logics are actually incarnated in DIA, I will provide a concrete example of language-corporeality attunement.

10.1.1 Incarnating Linear, Circular, and Spherical Logics

The bridging of the language-corporeality gap in DIA is perhaps best represented by the way the shift from the linear or either/or logic of the Being to the non-linear or circular logic of the Becoming is incarnated. This is a shift that, rather than remaining at a conceptual or symbolic level, needs to be actually embodied at the physical level too. In practice, this is achieved by shifting from linear (stop/start or on/off) to circular (smooth or continuous) body movements. In fact, as shown below, in addition to the linear and circular, a third level – that of the spherical – is added.

Here the third spherical level works well as a reminder that in DIA, analytical distinctions are always functional – they can entail dualities like yin and yang or mind and body, tripartite distinctions like jing, qi, and shen, the five elements of water, wood, fire, earth, and metal, or can include the hundreds of acupuncture points or energy gates[16]. Consistent with Whitehead's (see chapter 7.2.1) arguments, here analytical dualities are only a starting point for more nuanced analyses.

In this light, we can have an analysis of three (rather than two) major steps in body movements which, in the words of Kleiman (2012), are:

> Moving along this evolution from straight lines to circles to spheres. [And, along the physical movements, there is also the shift from a] linear awareness [to a] circular kind of awareness [and to

---

[16] Energy gates can overlap with acupuncture points and, according to Frantzis (2006/1993: 129, original emphasis), are "major relay stations of the body, where the strength of the life current *(chi)* moving through the system is regulated".

a type of awareness where one experiences] all at the same time, but it's not your mind, it's not your body, and it's not your awareness, now you're into the game of sor- the spherical nature [of DIA].

Indeed, in DIA even what appears a linear movement to the novice, to be executed correctly, has to turn first into a circular and, ultimately and ideally, a spherical movement, where the dramatic shift from the Being to the Becoming has been fully actualised. As explained by Cavel (2017: 98):

> As spherical movement is embodied on ever deeper levels, all motion follows one simple rule:
>
> > if there is down, there is up;
> >
> > if there is forward, there is back;
> >
> > if there is left, there is right.

In turn, this rule allows a shift from muscular movement according to reciprocal inhibition to 'bend-and-stretch techniques' where there is neither muscular contraction nor linear movements – in Cavel's (2017: 5, original emphasis) words:

> **Reciprocal inhibition** is the prevailing Western model for explaining how muscles control joints to move the body and states that a group of muscles on one side of a joint must contract to draw a limb towards the body while its opposing group relaxes; then the opposing group must contract while the initial group relaxes to subsequently draw the limb away from the body. **Bend-and-stretch techniques** disprove this model as the only method for moving the body by activating all the body's muscles – without contraction. Just about any internal arts student who has a grounding in the basics can demonstrate this base technique on demand; truly advanced practitioners will demonstrate bend-and-stretch in every move of their flowing form.

The primacy of non-linearity is reiterated by Myers (Theosophical Society, 2016):

> [E]very movement in Tai Chi is circular. There is no, there is no movement in Tai Chi that is linear. If you, if you come across someone doing Tai Chi and they do, they do linear movements, it is not Tai Chi. <chuckles> It has to be circular in order for it to work. In fact, the Taoists are all about

217

circles. Erm the Tai Chi symbol is a circle or a sphere; you know, the cycle of being born to death and whatever else is a circle, everything is a circle.

However, it is again Kleiman who provides a more detailed depiction of this linear/circularity/sphericality shift involving both the physical and mental level – the way the body moves corresponds to the way the mind moves (and vice versa). To outline the changes from linear to circular and to spherical movements – where one moves into the territory of a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment – Kleiman (2012) employs the example of a qigong set called Circling Hands:

> [W]hen you start to look at specific movement patterns, the relative degree of linear movement or circular movement or spherical movement inherent in a particular [tai chi] form or [neigong/qigong] set has a lot to do with what, how it opens up the potential for your mind and your energy to move. […H]ow the body moves influences how your mind moves, and our goal is to move along this continuum from a rigid, hard, stop/start kinda mind, to some – a mind that's more flowing and fluid and circular and spherical.
>
> […]
>
> So the first stage that you go through with this, um, is to learn how to take some of the stop/start, the on/off qualities out of your movements. […] And I see this all the time whenever, y'know, day one we're gonna start new classes next week – people will come in and start to learn Tai Chi and because of the precision and the choreography and the coordination it takes, they have more on/off kind of movement. I show them the first move and it's a bunch of sticks and lines that don't quite match up.
>
> […]
>
> But you have to pay attention if you wanna get past that stage – you have to pay attention to something really specifically: and I call it 'turning the wheel' […] I remember this distinct sensation, of the first time we were doing Circling Hands, where you just move your arms and your hands in a, in a circle – sounds really simple, right? – but I remember the first time I had this sensation of not having stop/start movement, and actually it was a little unnerving – it was a little,

218

uh, it was, it was strange because as you turn the wheel you go around the wheel and by definition there's no stop/start place, so, you know that sensation when you come, you crest over the top of the ferris wheel, and it feels like you're going forward but all of a sudden you're going down and you're going forward at the same time?

[…] So that's the big jump from going from on/off movement, linear straight line movement, to circular movement

[…]

The next level when you start to key in the circular movement, it's the difference between going around a wheel, and going over a ball. So if you've got the wheel, it's like you just go around one; you go around the equator of the ball, right? And that's like turning the wheel. But now if you run your hand continuously over the top, the bottom, the sides of the ball, and you do it with both hands, all of a sudden the dimensions that have to shift and change are much greater. And so if y– the place that you wan– the thing that you wanna see here is that just what it takes in your awareness to track the rolling feeling continuously is gonna be a-a-a jump in the number of dimensions that you'll have to track at once, compared to the very um different feeling already of going around a wheel.

[….]

The basic idea that we wanna lay out so far is the difference, if you take it really simply, between taking your hands, first stage, making a square – forward, down, back, up – as you go through your practice you try to turn that into a circle, so you go forward, falling forward – haha – falling down, falling down and back, falling up, and in, and up, and out – so you have this constant kind of two-dimensional change. And when you get into sphericality, it's another dimen– I don't even know if it's three dimensions now or four or more or what, but you're gonna have even more stuff to track […] then what you've done if you figure out in your nervous system how to make these more spherical movements, how to roll the ball, and stay with it, physically, release your nervous system in a way that allows the physical thing to happen, then all of a sudden what you've done is you've hitched your mind to the movements in a way that's gonna start to open the mind and open your awareness in this new way. So the first major point here is that if you got through this progression

of straight lines to circles to spheres with your physical movements, you're starting to key into the movement of the mind.

[…]

The real payoff o-of spherical movement is that it changes the quality of mind that you can bring to anything, and so instead of working on one thing at a time, and then you think about the next thing, and you think about the next thing, you start to sense more than one thing at a time. And you start to feel the shape of the movement, what's going on inside the movement, and how things are passing through the movement without getting sucked into each little detail and each little piece.

Therefore, also the relationship between corporeality and language is conceptualised according to a principle of dynamic correspondence, where the two terms can be more or less attuned at the phenomenological level – in the example provided by Kleiman above, there is an attunement between spherical movements and a paradoxical/non-linear logic. Hence, while in DIA there is a clear acknowledgment that the symbolic dimension of language can detach our mind from our body, there is also the awareness that language can address the tacit knowledge of the body. I will show below that, although Spinoza does not examine it in great depth, his perspective on the relationship between our symbolic and corporeal dimensions is consistent with that of DIA practitioners. In addition, to show in what ways language has roots in our body's movements, I will employ the neuroscientific paradigm of mirror neurons as well as the anthropological observations of Csordas.

10.2 The Corporeal Roots of Language

Although Spinoza does not address the matter in a direct manner, as mind (and the symbolic world) and body (and the carnal dimension) co-arise, it is implicit in his theorising that, rather than being cut off from our corporeality, language is ultimately intertwined with it. In fact, consistent with the view of the DIA practitioner, for Spinoza, language can both disclose and conceal, and it

is by employing the former aspect that the Dutch philosopher intends to address the tacit knowledge of the body and access a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment.

As noted by philosopher David Savan (1972), although for Spinoza language cannot fully explicate the nature of reality, it can nevertheless be employed as an instrument to actually access it. Therefore, as we have seen with DIA, while the mode of the Becoming and the phenomenological disappearance of dualism(s) is something that words alone cannot fully express, words can nevertheless assist us, and indeed are a necessary aid, to bring about changes in modes of embodiment.

Resonating with DIA instructors' invitations to aim at the 'real information happening behind the words' (see chapter 8.1.1), Savan (1972: 248; see also Lærke, 2014) argues that for Spinoza "a thing is understood when it is perceived simply by the mind without words and images". Indeed, to achieve this extra-linguistic knowledge – this "image-free philosophy" (Lærke, 2014: 531) – Spinoza builds his own philosophical language: a "language of the divine intellect" (Zourabichvili, 2002, in Lærke, 2014: 523). This is a language which paradoxically aims at overcoming the limitations of language itself.

Similarly, philosopher Pierre-François Moreau (1994, in Lærke, 2014: 523) notes that Spinoza begins his theorising with a common usage of language to then modify it so that it can indicate what is not expressible in words – as he explains, "common usage forms a kind of trampoline for those who wish to distance themselves from this usage". In this respect, it is significant that the debates on Spinoza's use of language can be summed up by positions sustaining that, for the Dutch philosopher, language is ultimately unable to express philosophical truths, and other standpoints arguing instead for Spinoza's conviction in the power of language to reveal such truths (Lærke, 2014). However, as for Spinoza language both discloses and conceals, these perspectives are not as much in opposition as it might seem.

For instance, Spinoza acknowledges the concealing aspect of language when he notes that "it is not to be doubted that words, as much as the imagination, can be the cause of many and great

errors, unless we are very wary of them" (in Lærke, 2014: 529) and that "[p]hilosophers preoccupied with words, or grammar […] fall into such errors. For they judge the things from the words, not the words from the things" (ibid.: 534-535). On the other hand, the revealing aspect of language is emphasised by philosopher Mogens Lærke (2014: 525) when he notes that "[f]or Spinoza, on the most basic level, words signify, or stand for, the images or traces left by external bodies on ours".

Indeed, resembling the arguments of cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson (1999; see also Sheets-Johnstone, 2011) according to whom the structure of human embodiment constitutes the ground on which linguistic concepts are formed, Spinoza (in Lærke, 2014: 526) himself contends that words follow "the very action and order of nature". Of course, it is this latter revealing aspect that Spinoza employs to achieve his aims.

In fact, if we bear in mind that Spinoza's chief aim is to access a non-dichotomous/non-linear/circular way to get to know and act in the world, it does not come as a surprise that some early critics of the Dutch philosopher judged the Spinozian language as paradoxical. For example, Noël Aubert de Versé (1685, in Lærke, 2014: 534-535) argued that the "sort of language that we find in Spinoza, that the substance or God is cause of itself, or of its existence, is complete nonsense, and something which is contradictory and unintelligible for the mind". Here, while de Versé's arguments can certainly be valid at the level of the either/or logic of the Being, they show their limitations at the level of the paradoxical logic of the Becoming.

That said, however, as Spinoza never elucidates in detail the language-corporeality relationship (Savan, 1972), I wish to compensate for this lacuna by resorting to the neuroscientific paradigm of mirror neurons and to the additional anthropological help of Csordas. This transdisciplinary exercise will allow us to understand in more depth the character of this language-corporeality relationship, and will show in what ways, albeit possessing different properties, these two dimensions are intimately linked – indeed they are a duality in unity.

10.2.1 Bridging the Language-Corporeality Gap: Mirror Neurons and the Carnalisation of Language

Mirror neurons are particular sensory-motor brain cells which discharge not only when the subject executes a purposeful action, but also when that action is observed as carried out by another subject (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008). That is, when the subject observes an action, these neurons fire *as if* the observer was personally performing that action (ibid.). On this ground, neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti and philosopher Corrado Sinigaglia (2008) theorise mirror neurons as underpinning a resonance of feelings, an intercorporeal attunement, a shared form of embodiment, which would evoke the lived experience of a particular body movement and the purpose attached to it by merely observing someone else carrying out that movement.

In other words, these neurons appear to be part of an 'embodied simulation' system which would allow the embodied subject to implicitly understand someone else's actions, intentions, and purposes with no need to resort to mentalistic/linguistic competencies, but, rather, by remaining at a pre-objective/non-representational level (Gallese, 2010; 2005). According to cognitive scientist Vittorio Gallese (2005: 43):

> This level is implicit, […] when the organism is confronting the intentional behavior of others, it produces a specific phenomenal state of "intentional attunement". This phenomenal state generates a peculiar quality of familiarity with other individuals, produced by the collapse of the others' intentions into the observer's ones.

Drawing on the phenomenological tradition, Gallese (2010) suggests that mirror neurons constitute the neural basis of intersubjectivity – a 'between-world' linking two subjective experiences at a tacit/extra-discursive level (Zahavi, 1999). Yet, and crucially, while mirror neurons appear to explain aspects of our lived experience belonging to pre-linguistic realms, they have also been employed to theorise the development of language and of the symbolic world in humans. In this way, mirror neurons constitute a bridge between non-representational and representational forms of knowledge, as well as language and corporeality.

Starting from the premise that they allow the recognition of the intention of an action observed as performed by someone else, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 142) view mirror neurons as "a mechanism to transform visual information directly into potential motor acts". For instance, under experimental conditions which did not provide context, the type of grip on a cup of tea may be understood as either having the goal of drinking from the cup, or of clearing the cup away after breakfast (Iacoboni et al., 2005, in Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008: 126). Although this is certainly not a well-developed form of communication, as Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 154) note:

> [T]he very first signs of movement in the hand 'communicate' something to us and that something is the meaning of the act: this is what 'counts', what we share with the person who is executing the acts, thanks to the activation of our motor areas.

By drawing on George Herbert Mead, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 155, original emphasis) suggest that this implicit communicative intention might have become a more explicit "gestural conversation" through a form of "*mutual readjustment*". That is, the implicit grasping of the intention of someone's actions, along with both the capacities to imitate those actions and the ability to recognise one's own actions as intentionally imitated by others – in other words, the formation of an intentional intersubjectivity – might have triggered a process of co-constitution of expressly communicative acts, which may have been the precursor of more explicit forms of communication, eventually developing into language as we know it.

In this respect, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 154) describe a convincing scenario depicting the shift from pre-objective to objectified forms of communication occurring in a manner not too dissimilar from the circular dynamics characterising DIA training:

> Let us suppose, for example, that the act we are watching is of particular interest to us. In this case, when we see the other person moving their hand, our hand may tend to move in a similar manner almost without our being aware of it; this slight movement will not escape the attention of the other person and may modify their behaviour. The mirror mechanism which allowed us to understand the act of the other person from their very first movements, also ensures that we comprehend the

effects our involuntary response has produced, thus creating a relationship of reciprocal interaction between our hand and that of the other person.

Hence, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008) believe that the evolution of language has more to do with primitive forms of gestural communications than vocal communications. In line with the principle of mind-body correspondence, here language develops *with* body's movements and feelings. Indeed, as Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 159) themselves note "[t]he concept of the gestural origin of language is anything but new". They list a series of pieces of evidence supporting the view that language arose from the integration of facial and hand gestures, and that vocalisations were initially merely accompanying those gestures.

For instance, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 164) cite the work carried out by amateur researcher Richard Paget in the early 1930s, who reported a correspondence between sounds and meaning, and hand gestures and movements of the mouth, lips, and tongue. For example, Paget (ibid.) contended that the sounds of the vowels 'A' and 'I' were connected to the handling and/or indication of something respectively large or small. Paget, in other words, was pointing out a link between the shape assumed by the hand when grasping an object and that of the mouth. Paget's intuition is consistent with recent empirical investigations showing a connection between manual acts and oro-laryngeal articulations, and providing support to the argument that grasping larger objects yields larger oro-laryngeal gestures and syllable pronunciation (Gentilucci et al., 2001, in Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008: 165-166).

This hand-mouth connection is also supported by clinical studies, where patients with cerebral lesions are helped to recover their speech by the use of manual gestures (Hadar et al., 1998, in Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008: 167). In the words of Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 166, original emphasis):

> [M]otor acts requiring a large aperture of the hand and oro-laryngeal acts requiring a large aperture of the mouth appear to be based on a common neural organisation that represents a *vestigia* of the stage in the evolution of language in which sound started to convey meaning thanks to the capacity

of the mouth and oro-laryngeal systems to articulate gesture with a semiotic value analogous to those coded by the manual system.

Of course, the integration of manual and oro-facial gestures was an early stage of language development, which was then followed by the emergence of mimetic/gestural proto-signs, the appearance of a bimodal proto-language involving both gestures and sounds, and, finally, the prevalently vocal form of language as we use it today, characterised by the distinction of the vocal system from the gestural, and the consequent emergence of the symbolic world as a system in its own right, with its peculiar properties (ibid.).

However, resembling DIA's perspective, what Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia's physiological account highlights is that although language can detach us from corporeality, it is ultimately intimately linked to the pre-objective/non-representational/sensuous dimension of embodiment. In turn, this acknowledgment brings us back to Csordas' effort to reveal the fictive character of the oppositions between language and experience, textuality and embodiment, and the representational and the non-representational. Indeed, Csordas' (see chapter 3.2) quest into the (inter)corporeal nature of language, which we saw when discussing the corporeal turn, has conducted him on a path parallel to that of Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia.

In a more recent work, Csordas (2008: 111) "trace[s] a progression from interaction as inherently meaningful to intersubjectivity, and from intersubjectivity […] to intercorporeality". In this way, it is from "intercorporeality as a mode of collective presence in the world" (ibid.: 117) – i.e., from the shared form of embodiment theorised by Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia – which language would originate. Csordas is "carnalizing language" (ibid.: 117) when he argues that "the filaments of intentionality that crisscross between and among us humans take sensuous form in language. Speaking is a kind of sonorous touching; language is tissue in the flesh of the world" (ibid.: 118).

Nevertheless, his contention does not imply the dismissal of the self-referential character of textuality. What Csordas (ibid.: 119) is pointing out is that, once again, language can *both* disclose *and* obscure, and we cannot only take account of the former feature while ignoring the latter:

> [The fact that] language can be described as a medium of experience does not mean that it mediates experience by distorting something true but inaccessible. [...L]anguage can both disclose and obscure experience, but our narrative theory sometimes seems only to acknowledge that it can obscure and distort.

Therefore, while at one point in our history there has been the emergence of a distinction from a system which was relating on both sounds and gestures to another which, by being only circumscribed by sounds and written signs, acquired its autonomy, this is not to say that language has lost its (inter)corporeal, non-verbal, and material connections – language would be meaningless otherwise. This is well explained by philosopher of language Horst Ruthrof (2000, in Csordas, 2008: 114):

> Language is empty, it remains without meaning, if it is not associated with its Other, the nonverbal. If we had not learned from earliest childhood, perhaps to some extent even prenatally, how to associate linguistic sounds with nonverbal materials, we would have no meaning. This Other of language is not the world as a set of unmediated data, but rather a fabric of nonverbal signs out of which cultures weave the world the way they see it.

Cutting across the cognitive sciences, phenomenology, and anthropology, the above perspective on the language-corporeality relationship appears to be strikingly consistent with Spinoza's and DIA's, where our lived experience is mediated by, but also given in, language, which therefore can be effectively employed to access the pre-objective/tacit knowledge of the body. Here, while language and corporeality can be considered as two distinct experiential dimensions of embodiment, each with its own peculiar properties, ultimately they are not cut off from one another.

These arguments lead us to delve deeper into another relationship closely related to that between language and corporeality: this is the relationship between the representational and the non-representational, or in different guises, between cognition and tacit knowledge of the body, or reflective and pre-reflective forms of knowledge. Perhaps unsurprisingly for the reader at this point, in DIA training these two forms of knowledge too can be disattuned or attuned, with the

227

latter option being that sought by the practitioner, while the former that to be avoided. In fact, below I will show that, resembling what occurs with the language-corporeality relationship, the DIA practitioner pragmatically engages with the representational and the non-representational with the aim of bringing together these two dimensions of embodiment.

Chapter 11: THE REPRESENTATIONAL AND THE NON-REPRESENTATIONAL

11.1 Using the Reflective to Target the Pre-reflective

Like other relationships previously examined, also that between the representational and the non-representational is grounded in a principle of dynamic correspondence where the two terms can be more or less attuned at the phenomenological level – the aim of the DIA practitioner being the former option. Overlapping with the Being/Becoming's and language/corporeality's analytical distinction, Frantzis (2006/1993: 233) provides an explanation of the representational and non-representational which appears to be useful in shedding light on these forms of knowledge: "[t]here are two kinds of knowledge about body/mind subjects. The first entails only that you intellectually understand the framework within which it exists. The second type of knowledge regarding neigong requires that you experience it in your body".

In an online video, Frantzis calls the lack of attunement between these two forms – the representational and the non-representational – 'disassociation'. Resonating with Cavel's (see chapter 8.1) warning of becoming a legend in one's own mind, Frantzis (Energy Arts, 2013b) makes an argument against a misuse of visualisations detached from a sensuous/non-representational dimension:

> In Tai Chi you feel your body and if you're going to visualise, if you're going to visualise, you must also feel your body. You must never [not] feel, not feel your body but visualise what you're doing and you can see this if it makes a type of er, disassociation.

> So, for example, I hope you can see this with my eyes. When I'm doing this now [he is performing a tai chi move], I'm looking and I'm feeling my body. I'm feeling my body. I'm feeling my body. Or I can do it this way, I'll just do a different movement [he performs a different movement]. I can be seeing myself doing this form but I'm not really feeling my body, I'm just, I'm seeing a picture of somebody doing it. Maybe that somebody's me. Maybe it's somebody else. It's kinda hard to tell at times but doing a movement so that you're just kinda out there and you're visualising it is not the

same thing as completely feeling what's happening inside yourself and if you can visualise the inside of your body as you're feeling it, then it's fine.

But if you only can visualise the inside of your body but not feel it, that's not fine, and what's worse of all three is that you don't feel your body at all but you visualise yourself like you're out there somewhere and for that, you might as well just get one of these brainwave goggles, let the lights flash and listen to the sounds 'cause that's purely a brain operation. It's not a brain operation, it's integrating with all the flesh of your body. So I think all of these together are big, very common mistakes that people make during Tai Chi.

Similarly, Kleiman (2013a) admits he fell for the mistake of remaining stuck for a long time on the representational level when addressing his energy gates:

[T]he mistake that I did and try to visualise a bunch of dots all over your body. I did that for years when I first started this practice, and finally I realised I was so stuck in the visualisation that I took three years and I didn't do any gate work, I just did feel the body, feel the body, feel the body, sink down through the body, sink my chi, get a sense of something dropping through, and when I came back to the gates, and tried to do specific slices, specific sections, specific points, I had such a better feeling for what the inside of my body was and what my energy was, that… and then the gates made sense from a felt point of view, not a visualised dot point of view.

Again in Frantzis' (2012) words:

[T]hose little funny pictures, channels and chakras[17], well… you know something it's for real. But it's not for real, if you can't manifest it inside you. Then, it's a pretty picture book.

By telling me about a mundane practice such as having a daily shower, DIA practitioner Chris provides a simple yet effective example of how a visualisation or a metaphor at the representational level can directly target the non-representational dimension to obtain sung (see chapter 10.1). Aiming to drop energy into the lower part of his body to counterbalance feelings of

---

[17] Chakras are energy points/gates in the body according to the Indian philosophical and religious tradition.

anxiety where instead chi tends to move in upper areas like the chest, below Chris incarnates the metaphor of the shower suggested by Brian when training:

> Chris: I wake up feeling very anxious, every morning I'm very anxious [this feeling is due to Chris' extremely difficult family situation], but I go into the shower and as I stand under the shower I put into practice this idea of being… everything washing through you as he [Brian] tells us.

> Vittorio: This is actually… it's metaphorical but it's real, for you actually got the feeling of the shower as well.

> Chris: And I make it real and my anxiety goes and I find that I can face the day.

The need to bring together the representational and the non-representational appears to be well acknowledged also by participants who were not training within Frantzis' tradition, like Catherine, Hannah, and Danielle. For instance, Catherine, who has already described the realm of visualisation earlier as having her 'mind like a balloon bobbing around' (see chapter 8.1), clarifies further that in her tai chi training, language and visualisations were always targeting the body – the aim here being, once more, the attunement of the two dimensions:

> Catherine: Well it wasn't so much visualisation, like she [Catherine's DIA instructor] wasn't telling us to visualise any specific –

> Vittorio: Yeah.

> Catherine: – like anything that wasn't there, but she had a way of, especially during the warm-ups, kind of drawing our attention to one bodily thing or another, and telling us to notice things, like for example when we were erm… there was a bit of the warm-up that ended, that, that involved sort of hanging down stretch where you'd sort of lean forward until the whole front of you was hanging down and your feet were… your, your hand, your hands were kind of s– … erm… almost dragging on the floor, and… she would sort of try and draw your attention to where are you carrying tension? And this sounded at first like a kind of a quite vague, hippyish thing to say, and then I realised that there were particular knots in my back or in my hamstrings or whatever which were making that bit not stretch as easily as the other side, for example.

[…]

Oh just er yeah, there was never any sort of imagining anything that –

Vittorio: No?

Catherine: – wasn't actually happening. It was all about awareness of what was going on in the moment.

Hannah makes a similar argument and qualifies the visualisations employed in her training as 'pragmatic':

Vittorio: [D]oes the teacher in your class use er um… mental visualisations?

Hannah: <Pause> Uh… a little bit. Um… I don't know if we mean the same thing by it. I mean she… she… would sometimes say… 'You could think about energy flow as going from… down a red line down your shoulder' and so on, but er, it's kind of a suggestion […] Er, it's all very… kind of pragmatic.

Being a DIA instructor, Danielle appears to be particularly suspicious of visualisations:

Vittorio: […] do er, do you use personally or do you erm… er… use in the, in the class when you teach, er mental er visualisations?

Danielle: Erm, no. But, no. Erm… I think… that's a little bit more you're j– … we're bringing the awareness into the head a lot more if you're trying to do the visualisations, whereas actually what you want is to… you may, you might want people to be aware of their feet or their hips or something like that. So erm … no, I tend not to use the visualisations.

Yet, when I asked her if she dwells on verbal explanations and uses metaphors, mirroring Hannah's explanation, Danielle explains that she does, but in a functional way:

Danielle: It's a, it's a very practical thing, isn't it? And also erm… yeah, I mean kind of I guess one of the ways you can try to… I don't know if it's a, it's a visualisation, it's more a feeling… you can say oh like draw the breath up from the, the floor… you know, what… you might mean is like oh

232

you're going to like open the blood vessels, but you can't tell people to do that. You, you need to

tell them in a, a simple thing that they can try and then hopefully they will feel something and then

when they feel, start to feel it, then they feel what the thing is that you're trying to tell them, so it's

kind of circular.

To evoke Shilling's (see chapter 5.2) comment on contemporary dance training's emphasis being

related to the '*affective weight* of concepts and symbols', in DIA, the employment of the

representational level, the verbal, or the use of metaphors is always targeting a change in the body

at the level of its tacit knowledge. As also witnessed by the use of the numerous metaphors we

have encountered to evoke specific feelings and bodily changes, the representational level is

inevitably involved in the training – it could not be otherwise.

DIA practitioner Alice's observations explain the above clearly. On the one hand, she

acknowledges the primacy of the pre-reflective and enjoys her tai chi training as she is able to

avoid any reflexive activity (something that, being an academic, she engages in most of the time):

> Alice: [In tai chi training] there is this thing that grasps you in your body, and does not necessarily
>
> get to a level of awareness, or, anyway, I am not interested in doing it, reach that level, because I
>
> could destroy it [the practice].

On the other hand, however, she finds metaphors like that of having a "tap below the bellybutton"

to indicate the lower dantien, or "imagining air like water" to ameliorate her breathing, extremely

useful – for Alice these are practical visualisations, "images… to do things".

In a similar vein DIA practitioner Francisca, another academic who appreciates tai chi for reasons

similar to Alice's, acknowledges both the importance of the representational and of verbal

explanations and the need to employ those to target the non-representational and the body and,

again, 'to do things' – for her, representational and non-representational must not be separate but

attuned:

> Francisca: the thing is like talking and doing. I, I would not say that is, yeah, something separate,
>
> because I don't like these people in for instance sometimes I have in the UK my teacher is not there

and there… are other people that replace her for one class, and… I don't like when they stay there explaining, explaining, explaining and do nothing. I like to do the things with an explanation, but to do it.

Therefore, if the representational is not adequately employed, the results are clearly unsatisfactory, as I have witnessed in a number of tai chi and qigong classes I attended at the beginning of my empirical investigation where verbal explanations and visualisations appeared to be the aim rather than the instruments to achieve it.

To be sure, however, language and the representational are essential in training; they are also essential to intervene when things go 'wrong'. In this respect, one of my DIA classmates – Jane – told me the story of when she felt 'light-headed' during training (not a very uncommon instance when moving chi in the upper part of the body) and Brian used intercorporeal and non-representational interaction along with verbal communication and visualisation in his intervention:

> Jane: [I]t was near the end of Dragon and Tiger, doing this movement a few times I started to feel really light-headed, I felt a bit spaced out, you know, I just, just felt really, really strange, and Martha [a pseudonym] called Brian over and he came and kind of… put his hands on my head, you know, at the top of my throat, and he kind of… got that sinking feeling.
>
> […] he kind of talked me through you know, bring your, your th, your thoughts down and imagine everything sinking down over your face into your chest, into your stomach, your back, your, your feet sort of going down into the ground and –
>
> Vittorio: So he was also using a bit visualisation so he was talking to you?
>
> Jane: Yes, yeah. Yeah.

When I probed Brian on the relationship between the representational and the non-representational by noticing that he employs metaphors, images, and copious verbal explanations in his teaching, he replied that language and visualisations are certainly used, but only as a means, rather than an end – the danger to avoid is to remain stuck on the representational level:

234

Brian: Language is really, really important. But at a certain point you then need to look at your, what it points at.

Vittorio: No, no, absolutely, it makes sense.

Brian: And, and, and this school is particularly articulate. Most schools don't talk about this stuff the way we talk about it. They [inaudible]

Vittorio: I know, yeah, this is one of the, the characteristics I think – of, of the, of our, you know, your class at least, I don't know the, the other people in, in er… this tradition, Bruce [Frantzis] and stuff, but there, there's lots of talking. Apart from the tea[18] and so on. That, that's why erm also I found that you know, really, there was again er, er, er, er, it's, it's just the finger pointing – but you, probably need that.

Brian: You need it, in this culture.

Vittorio: Especially for us Westerners, it's a tool –

Brian: This culture –

Vittorio: – to actually get there. You know.

Brian: Oh yeah. I, I've seen lots of people who've, who've done the other thing as well. You just stand there and you see what happens, and… <pause> they get some of it but they don't get all of it, because… yeah, the words are really useful, so when Bruce starts saying things like… you know, 'There's this energy channel happening here, now… I'm doing it to you, can you feel it?' You know what to look for. Other than just standing there and you get this –

Vittorio: Yes.

Brian: – vague idea that something's happening.

Vittorio: Yes. Yes.

---

[18] We have tea breaks in Brian's classes in order to rest and also reflect on and discuss what has been previously done. Brian sees these breaks as an integral part of the training and necessary to allow new movements and feelings to sink into the body.

Brian: I've met, I've met Tai, Tai Chi teachers in this country who've been teaching for 40 years. And… they can't talk about it. They try to tell you something – And all you hear… and every word they say is, 'Do you know what I mean?'

Vittorio: I've been in classes –

Brian: 'D'you know what I mean?' There's this thing, 'd'you know what I mean?' And it feels a bit like… do you know what I mean?'

Vittorio: You know that I've been in other classes.

Brian: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[…]

Vittorio: And in very simple terms this use, the, sometimes it's so irritating for me, this use of visualisations –

Brian: Oh!

Vittorio: You do, you do it as well, but they are again the finger is finalised, finalised [aiming] to, to actually feel the feeling. It's a sensation.

Brian: Absolutely.

Vittorio: It's not just about…err –

Brian: Imagine, yeah. It's, it's, it's one of those, I think the disease of a lot of Qigongs and Tai Chis out there is that they're –

Vittorio: Yeah, no –

Brian: – busy making a mental image.

Vittorio: I, I, I, I definitely agree. I definitely agree <laughs> I've been in classes so… I, just ridiculous sometimes you know.

Brian: Yeah… you, you look at these people and they, they're busy imaging that they're doing all sorts of things and nothing is happening.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Brian: It's… yeah. It's quite common.

Vittorio: Yeah.

Brian: I remember erm, at one of Bruce's trainings, er, somebody who had been training with Mantak Chia for years –

Vittorio: I think I heard about him actually.

Brian: He's one of these big visualisation people.

Vittorio: Oh right.

Brian: And you know, he's… taught lots of people. And this, this person was sitting there, this was, was Dragon and Tiger, and he was saying… 'Oh yes, I'm, I'm er, I'm doing everything Bruce was talking about, I, you know, I can do it all, it's easy. I'm going to ask him if I can do the level 3 training'. You know there, there are only four people in the, in the, in the whole course who were anywhere ready to do, do the level 3, and this was somebody who'd never been to a Bruce training before. 'Oh yeah, I can, I can do it all.' And erm so I, I watched him do his tests. <Pause> No, no, it was before he did his tests. Before he did his tests.

Vittorio: With Bruce? < chuckles >

Brian: Yeah, yeah, and it was… it was a, a pre-test day and erm he started doing his Dragon and Tiger and… Bruce said erm, 'You're visualising, you're not doing anything. You need to be in your body!'

Vittorio: I can imagine Bruce although I don't know him… <laughing[19]>

---

[19] My laughs are due to the fact that Frantzis has a reputation for his unnecessarily brutal remarks during training.

> Brian: He was, he was quite and… nothing is happening! <Laughs> He didn't pass his level 1 'cause all the things that he thought he was doing, it was just in his head. Nothing happening. <Laughs>

Therefore, along with the acknowledgment that, as sinologist Chad Hansen (de la Fuente, 2014) observes in relation to the Daoist tradition, "language creates divisions where there is unity", by recognising that the tradition he teaches is 'particularly articulate' Brian also acknowledges that language and the representational can be used to address the tacit knowledge of the body.

Ultimately, the DIA practitioner's aim is to engage with the representational and the non-representational to attune the two dimensions, bring about change in embodied dispositions, and access a non-dichotomous mode of knowing and engaging with the world. And this is the aim of Spinoza too, onto whom I will now narrow my focus. In fact, when outlining Spinoza's view of the relationship between representational and non-representational dimensions of embodiment I will emphasise the theoretical component in order to re-turn to the controversial notion of affect. As shown in what follows, Spinoza does not set cognition and affect in opposition, or conceive of them as cut off from one another. Rather, he aims at bringing about change in affective dynamics by attuning these to our conscious deliberations.

11.2 Re-Turning to Affect

A fruitful way to outline Spinoza's view of the relationship between the representational and the non-representational, and the way he intends to attune these two dimensions, is by re-turning to the notion of affect – a crucial concept in the Dutch philosopher's project of human emancipation. In fact, if Spinoza's (1996/1994: 69-70, EIIID1,D2,D3, original emphasis) definition of affect is often evoked by affect theorists, it is rarely contextualised within a wider portion of text from *Ethics* as in the extract below:

> I call that cause adequate whose effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it. But I call it partial *or* inadequate, if its effects cannot be understood through it alone.

I say that we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, that is, when something in us or outside us follows from our nature, which can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone. On the other hand, I say that we are acted on when something happens in us, or something follows from our nature, from which we are only a partial cause.

By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections. *Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the affect an action; otherwise, a passion.*

While the notions of actions and passions, and adequate cause and inadequate cause, will become clear at the end of this chapter, I will begin my discussion with the two similar yet different terms: affect and affections – the original Latin words used by Spinoza are respectively *affectus* and *affectiones*. An affection is the state of a body resulting from its encounter with another body (Deleuze, 1988; Hallett, 1972). Deleuze (1978) explains the term by employing the example of sunrays falling on someone's body. In this instance, although the change of the state of one's body caused by the action of the sun – say, an increase of temperature – is a state of that particular body (someone's body), it nevertheless cannot occur without the action of another body (the sun).

Thus, an affection is always the outcome of an encounter between two bodies. Linked to this, an affect is instead what has been acquired by a body as a result of a particular encounter with another body – what is retained from an affection in the form of a novel embodied disposition. In the words of Hallett (1972: 175, original emphasis): "'*affectus*' […] is a *disposition* towards another arising from an *affectio* or *state* determined by that other". Deleuze's sunrays example can help to unpack the above.

Sunrays hit my body and cause an affection – e.g., an increase of temperature. In turn, such affection either increases (if, for example, it is winter and I am cold) or decreases (if, for instance, it is summer and I am hot) my power of acting (i.e., my degree of individuation, capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies, or attunement with the world – see chapter 9.2). As a

consequence, my body undergoes a change of its constitution (of its equilibrium of motion and rest, in Spinozian terms). While the state of my body following the encounter with the sunrays is an affection, the ensuing change in disposition is an affect. Therefore, while an affection captures the state of a body at the moment it encounters another body, an affect has to do with the actual passage from one state to another and the novel disposition originating from that encounter, which has increased or decreased one's power of acting.

The apparent overlap between the notions of affect (*affectus*) and affection (*affectio*) is, again, clarified by Hallett (1957: 97, original emphasis):

> [F]or Spinoza an *affectus* is, not the *affectio* by which greater or less perfection is conditioned but the attaining of greater or less perfection involved in the change of *affectio*, or involving it. Though the affectiones which are the improvement or deterioration are, as termini, involved in the affectus, the affectus itself is the passage, or the endeavour by which it is conditioned, and the idea of it is the idea of the transition or endeavour.

With his clarification, however, Hallett points out a further and crucial point: an affect of the body is always also an affect of the mind – 'the idea of the transition' or, as stated in Spinoza's definition, 'the ideas of these affections', is what is experienced by the embodied subject. Likewise, Deleuze (1988: 48-49, original emphasis) conceives of affects as affections turning into perceptions, and thus:

> [F]rom one state to another, from one image or idea to another, there are transitions, passages that are experienced, durations through which we pass to a greater or lesser perfection […] These continual durations or variations of perfection are called 'affects', or feelings (*affectus*).

Therefore, bearing in mind that the 'greater or lesser perfection' refers to one's capacities for agency, for Deleuze (ibid.: 49) an affect "involves an increase or decrease of the power of acting, for the body and the mind alike". This is, of course, faithful to the Spinozian psychophysical worldview whereby a change of the body corresponds to a change of the mind. Hence, as a

transition affecting both body and mind, an affect is the attainment of a shift in embodied disposition – both mind and body – which enhances or lessens one's degree of individuation.

On the ground of the above, I intend to show that, like a DIA practitioner, but differently from some interpretations in contemporary body studies, while Spinoza acknowledges that mind and body can be phenomenologically distinct, and that affect can bypass – or, in Frantzis' terms, be disassociated from – our conscious awareness, he nevertheless aims at attuning the two dimensions, so that the embodied agent can reflexively and actively address affects' dynamics, bring about changes in modes of embodiment, and thus increase her power of acting. In this way, resembling DIA training, Spinoza employs experiential dimensions – in this instance, affects – as analytical categories to achieve his aims.

In fact, Spinoza (1996/1994: 70-112, EIIIP1-P59I-XLVIII) lists and carefully analyses about fifty different affects – e.g., love, hate, hope, fear, anger, confidence, despair, gladness, remorse, inclination, aversion, devotion etc. – which are however only exemplary of the virtually infinite embodied dispositions. Not only do these affects need to be situated within a specific historical, social, and cultural milieu, but they are also unique to each individual (Hallett, 1957). While dwelling on the numerous affects discussed by Spinoza is certainly a task which would far exceed the framework of this thesis, we can however examine the three chief affects in the Dutch philosopher's theorising: desire, joy, and sadness. These appear to be those related to pre-reflective experiences, and those on which reflective experiences are built. Therefore, these three affects are particularly helpful to shed more light on the relationship between representational and non-representational experiential dimensions in Spinozian terms, and show that these two dimensions are not cut off from one another.

11.2.1 The Three Primary Affects: Desire, Joy, and Sadness

Spinoza's (1996/1994: 75-81, EIIIP6-P18) account of embodied dispositions begins with three primary affects: desire, joy, and sadness – these appear to be the only affects shared by all human beings, which all the others stem from or build on. "Desire is man's [sic] very essence" (Spinoza,

ibid.: 104, EIIIP59S): the most primary form of affect, an impulse to survive and maintain our individuation, our implicit awareness of the conatus, a consciousness of our power of acting and thus of being an agent – in Deleuze's (1988: 60; see also Forsyth, 1972; Hallett, 1957) reading, "Spinoza defines desire as the conatus having become conscious".

With desire Spinoza addresses the slippery and controversial territory where the Becoming turns into the Being, and where it is problematic to draw clear lines between the reflective and the pre-reflective, the cogito and the tacit cogito, what we are aware and what we are not aware of. Rather than a truly pre-individual experience (as this would be a contradiction in terms), this is the disclosure of the pre-individual realm to ourselves – an *entre-deux* or *mode of givenness* like Merleau-Ponty's 'no man's land', Hayles' 'cusp', Husserl's 'transcendence within immanence' (see chapters 3.4 & 3.5), or Massumi's 'interface between the virtual and the actual' (see chapter 4.2).

Similar to the taken-for-granted feeling of being a subject of experiences, a feeler of feelings, a thinker of thoughts, an initiator of actions, Spinoza's desire is the earliest experience of this disclosure – i.e., the pre-reflective experience *par excellence*. A pre-reflective experience is, in phenomenological terms, non-intentional, in the sense that it is an experience which does not have a content or an object – it is pre-objectified. Conversely, a reflective experience has a clear recognisable object – it is objectified. If one envisages the pre-reflective and the reflective on a continuum, at the very extreme pole of pre-reflective experiences we find what in phenomenological literature is often referred to as a *minimal self* – a pre-reflective awareness of *me* as a self in any given experience (Zahavi, 2005; 2013/2011).

This is an implicit knowledge of oneself as a single and enduring entity underpinning the ever-changing flow of all our experiences. Such knowledge is tacit not only in the sense of being 'given' and thus implicit, but also in the literal sense that it cannot be fully articulated in words, albeit still being, crucially, a conscious lived experience, rather than something we are utterly non-conscious of (Zahavi, 2005). Phenomenologist Dan Zahavi (2013/2011: 58, original emphasis)

describes it as "a dimension of *for-me-ness* or *mineness*". This is what presupposes high-order representational modes of thought, up to those which characterise, for example, our reflexive deliberations, which are instead at the opposite end of the pre-reflective/reflective continuum.

To be clear, such foundational pre-reflective experience is neither referring to the ineffable qualities of experience which philosophers call qualia – e.g., the taste of a chocolate ice cream or the smell of coffee – but to something even more, phenomenologically speaking, primordial. As a feature of experience which is implicitly self-given, in the words of Sartre (2003, in Zahavi, 2011/2013: 56), this 'mineness of the experience' is 'for-itself' – it is the phenomenological structure of our experiences, which needs introspective exercises to be accessed, such as, for example, forms of meditation (see Shear, 2000), psychoanalytic techniques (see Gendlin, 2003/1978), bioenergetics (see Beaupre, 2011), or DIA practices.

However, the fact that I am describing it here, or that, better than me, Zahavi (like many others) has provided an account of it, shows that such experience can be represented, at least to a certain extent. It is in this way, I suggest, that the phenomenological minimal self shows commonalities with Spinoza's desire as the consciousness of the conatus and what makes all our experiences possible in the first place – in the words of Hallett (1957: 78), for Spinoza, "in all knowledge there is involved an awareness of self as cognitive agent". With a qualification of desire in place, we can now proceed to those affects which are based on it: joy and sadness.

In Spinoza's (1996/1994: 104, EIIIP59S) words: "Joy is a man's [sic] passage from a lesser to a greater perfection. Sadness is a man's passage from a greater to lesser perfection". Given that for Spinoza 'perfection' regards one's degree of individuation or power of acting, joy is the experience of the attainment of the self-affirmation of ourselves as agents – the fulfilment of desire (Forsyth, 1972), the affect experienced when our body's and mind's power of acting increases (Deleuze, 1988). This is the subtle feeling that I experience when it is winter, I am cold, and sunrays hit my body.

Sadness is, of course, the opposite of joy. This is the feeling we experience when our power of acting decreases, when our self-affirmation is impeded, and desire cannot be fulfilled – e.g., it is summer, it is hot, sunrays hit my body and make the temperature unbearable for me. In very simple terms, joy and sadness could also be seen as elemental forms of pleasure and pain (Fløistad, 1972), or feelings which provide us with an elemental knowledge of what is 'good' or 'bad' for us, what favours or threatens the conatus (Deleuze, 1988; Hallett, 1957). In Spinoza's (1996/1994: 120, EIVP8, original emphasis) words, *"[t]he knowledge of good and evil is nothing but an affect of joy or sadness"*.

11.2.2 The Representational Aspect and the Analytical Currency of Affect

In light of the above, we can appreciate that these three basic affects, rather than being cut off from our consciousness, already involve a form of awareness, albeit a tacit/implicit/pre-reflective one. As philosopher Michael Della Rocca (2008: 31; see also Hallett, 1957) asserts, for Spinoza "[a]t the bottom all affects are representational". Of course, Della Rocca's (ibid.) use of the word representational is not intended to evoke a cognitivist and Cartesian scenario, but rather points out that every change of the body *is* also a change of the mind (and vice versa), and, as such, can be experienced. In fact, although Deleuze (1978) defines these subtle feelings of transition as non-representational, he makes it clear that he does not intend something which we are altogether non-conscious of, but rather an experience which is not clearly representable as an object – a pre-objectified experience, which one tends to take for granted and thus is not fully acknowledged.

It is in this sense that, I believe, we can analytically and productively employ the experiential dimensions of the representational – as an objectified experience, and the non-representational – as a pre-objectified experience. This is what the DIA practitioner does when she introspectively attends non-representational feelings, objectifies and represents them, so that they can be targeted to bring about change in her embodied dispositions. And this is what is involved in contemporary therapeutic forms like those we have already encountered with Gendlin (see chapter 6.3). Precisely in commenting on Gendlin's work, Glanzer (2014: 49) notes that changes in embodied

dispositions entail "a bi-directional process situated at […] the interface, or edge between implicit and explicit knowing in the extended body".

This is what Spinoza engages in too. Resembling a DIA practitioner or a patient of Gendlin, the Dutch philosopher employs experiential dimensions/analytical categories – e.g., affect, mind, body – at the level of the either/or logic of the Being as instruments to access the mode of the Becoming and bring about change. As explained by Brown and Stenner (2001: 90, original emphasis):

> Affects occur between finite things on the basis of their mutual relations, in the context of an infinitely productive Nature […] Here Spinoza's 'geometric method' serves as a tool to 'diagram' each encounter, demonstrating precisely which relations are at issue and the orderings of the bodies and ideas they call forth. The first step in analyzing encounters is to maintain the parallelism of body and mind. This involves, for Spinoza, a separate explication of how affects order relations between bodies and between ideas. Proximate causes are sought *within* each attribute. The body cannot act as the cause of changing order within ideas, nor do ideas directly bring about modifications in bodies. Since 'the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things' (E. II. prop. 7), what is sought is the dual expression of the encounter as it presents under each attribute.

Therefore, for Spinoza, attuning the representational and non-representational, and being aware of the dynamics involved in the affects, is key to yielding changes in modes of embodiment. On the ground of the above, we now have elements to understand the further analytical categories employed by the Dutch philosopher to achieve his aims – those categories encompassed in his qualification of affect: actions and passions, and adequate causes and inadequate causes.

According to Spinoza (1996/1994), passions are affects which emerge from encounters and affections of which we do not have an adequate knowledge and which therefore we are not the adequate cause. That is, passions are affects which do not originate from us in the deliberative exercise of our agency, affirming our conatus by bringing about novelty within the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Making also the internal/external distinction salient here, passions originate from external causes unknown or not adequately known by us. Not being able to grasp

the relations at stake and the patterns characterising the encounters from which these affects arise – or, in the current study's terms, not being the representational and non-representational dimensions attuned – we play a passive rather than an active role, and consequently our power of acting or capacities for agency diminish.

Conversely, actions are affects which emerge from encounters and affections of which we have an adequate knowledge and are adequate cause. Actions are not cut off from our conscious deliberations but are rather attuned with them. In this way, being affects that we have attended to and are aware of, actions originate from internal causes – here the representational and the non-representational are attuned, and we play an active role, which in turn increases our power of acting. Once again, while the affects can be disattuned from our conscious awareness, they can also be known by us, so that we can be their adequate cause – in Spinoza's (ibid.: 163, EVP3C, P4, original emphasis) words:

> The more an affect is known to us, then, the more it is in our power, and less the mind is acted on by it.
>
> *There is no affection of the body of which we cannot form a clear and distinct concept*

Therefore, Spinoza's qualification of affect and the notions included in it – affections, power of acting, actions, passions, adequate causes and inadequate causes – should now be clearer for the reader. It should furthermore now be evident that for Spinoza there is no insurmountable divide between affect and cognition, our conscious deliberations and the tacit knowledge of the body, or the representational and the non-representational – these are all dynamic relationships amenable to change, which can turn from dualism(s) to dualities. Affect can bypass our conscious thought, but can also be seized by it – the latter being the aim of both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza, who intend to acquire knowledge of the affects in order to avoid "disagreeable encounters" (Brown & Stenner, 2001: 93) or "disharmonious relations" (ibid.: 91), so that we can be attuned with the world around us, access the mode of the Becoming, and thus increase our power of acting.

Transcending the traditional cognition-emotion opposition still vexing contemporary human (ibid.) and natural sciences (Colombetti & Thompson, 2008), from feelings we can barely be aware of to our reflexive capacities, for Spinoza these are all experiential dimensions and analytical categories conceptualised on a continuum, which can vary according to different degrees. Indeed, it is the notion of degrees to which I wish to turn my attention in what follows. This notion will allow us to further expand our knowledge of Spinoza's project of human emancipation and of the ways our reflexive capacities are employed by the Dutch philosopher to target affective dynamics.

Even more importantly for the present study's aims, the following discussion will show us that, both for the DIA practitioner and Spinoza, the shift from the Being to the Becoming, rather than a single event, is best conceptualised in terms of degrees of integration or individuation, each possessing its own specific properties, ways of getting to know and acting in the world, and capacities for agency. In addition, the notion of degree functions as an antidote to sharp divides, oppositions, or conflations between the different modes and dimensions of embodiment.

Chapter 12: THE NOTION OF DEGREES

12.1 Daoist Degrees of Integration

As explained by Frantzis earlier (see chapter 7.1), the shift from the Being to the Becoming is not a single or fixed event but, rather, it is an ongoing struggle to move from a dichotomous towards a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment. In this way, in DIA embodiment is mainly conceptualised as an unfinished process where the attunement – or the integration, as put by DIA instructors – of the experiential dimensions/analytical categories previously outlined can be productively analysed according to different degrees, each yielding different modes of embodied knowledge and action, and attached emergent properties.

For example, Master Fang Ning, (Neigong.net, 2016c) below acknowledges ten levels of tai chi – compared to doors the practitioner needs to go through, each degree gives access to different embodied outcomes and capacities for agency:

> Tai Chi Chuan kung-fu is divided into ten levels.
>
> […]
>
> In level one, most of the movements are composed of stiff and rigid energy, very little of yielding energy. In the second level, yielding energy increases and rigid energy decreases in all movements. This is the result of understanding the concepts of push hands exercises and getting familiar with the opponent's energy and movements. In the third level, all the movements are controlled mainly by the yielding energy and one begins to understand the jing. At this time, one does not just understand and know the jing but is able to maneuver in a circular motion to neutralize the coming energy.
>
> […]
>
> Fourth to sixth level kung-fu is working with the advance circle […] When I speak of advance circle, it is not simply a response after retreat. It is in the process of retreating that your yielding

energy adheres to the opponent's energy at all times and under this condition you are forced to advance. For in this situation, your advance maneuver threatens and can cause your opponent to lose balance and get defeated. Your offensive maneuver can be a strike or just fa jing (release energy) and can send the opponent flying […] At this time the practitioner should feel the legs and feet are much stronger and are rooted […]

[…] From my sixty years of practical experience, level seven is the key level in which one is going from middle kung-fu into higher kung-fu transition. It is the level of using the mind to control all movements any way one likes […] At this time, one should find that part of the body is soft and every part of the body is solid. Every part of the body can yield and every part can fa jing. Therefore, depending on which part of the body is in contact with the opponent, that part of the body will strike the opponent.

 […]

Levels eight to ten are advanced Tai Chi Chuan kung-fu. Because I have not achieved this yet, I cannot define what it is. From what I heard from my teacher and sixty years of practical experience, anyone who has achieved this level can do wonderful things. This is what the classics commonly refer to when it says, 'the opponent does not know me but I know the opponent'. The body is so sensitive and light that one cannot add one feather, fly and mosquito cannot land on the body. When an opponent punches the body, the opponent is already injured and is flying backward but you did not see my improvement. Any movement can cause the opponent injury and bleeding. Of course, in martial arts training, there is no such thing as the end state. The more you practice, the better the skill. Skill is infinite. Tai Chi Chuan practitioners past and present have achieved skill that most people do not believe was humanly possible.

Chu's conclusion hints at what, in this study's terms, might be called a higher-order degree of the Becoming, endowed with emergent properties able to push the embodied agent to the threshold of her human capacities – it is here tempting to evoke Spinoza (1996/1994: 72, EP2S) when he states that "no one has yet determined what the body can do […] the body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature, can do many things which its mind wonders at". Similarly, although his teaching only includes the tripartite jing/qi/shen distinction, Brian acknowledges five main levels of

embodied knowledge and action in the Daoist tradition – in this instance, he identifies the highest-order degree of the Becoming as the Dao:

> Brian: And so it's… that merging of mind and body is the first step, yeah? One of the traditional erm structures that, that Ch- Chinese thought uses […] – er is Jing Qi Shen, so body, energy, spirit.
>
> Vittorio: Mm.
>
> Brian: There are actually two more levels to that as well, there's then Wu, which is nothingness, very similar to Buddhist… ideas for it.
>
> Vittorio: Yeah.
>
> Brian: Erm Dao.
>
> Vittorio: Right, so it's, Dao is actually higher level than –
>
> Brian: Yeah, mmm. Yeah.
>
> Vittorio: <Laughs>
>
> Brian: Qi Shen Wu Dao, so these, these steps, so you start with, you start with the body.
>
> Vittorio: Mm.
>
> Brian: Connect the body. Leads you to connecting to energy. So it's, it's a- again levels of integration.
>
> Vittorio: Mm.
>
> Brian: Once, once you get your, your energy working, which includes er all of the lower emotions, then you are going to Shen the spirit, which is all the higher emotions, mind– Once you, once that stage [inaudible] you're then moving into emptiness.

Having shown that the number of degrees of integration in DIA can vary, I now wish to narrow my focus onto the three levels employed in Frantzis' teaching – these are well illustrated by diagram

10, from Cavel, which furthermore highlights the overlaps and non-neat distinctions between the different levels and the neigong practices designed for each of them:
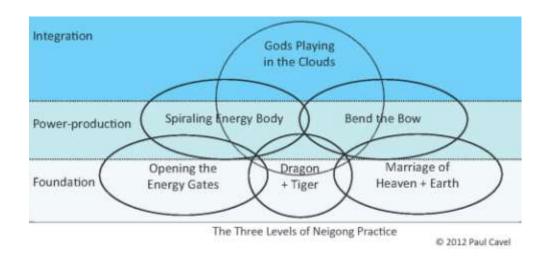

Diagram 10: Overlaps in levels of neigong practice (source: Kleiman, 2013d)

Cavel, along with Kleiman (2013b), expands on this diagram by providing an account of these different degrees of embodied knowledge and action, and the attached emergent properties:

> Kleiman: You said: 'you can think of Qigong as having three broadly defined levels, which are beginning or Foundation Practices, intermediate or Power Production Practices, advanced or Integration Practices'. In the Energy Arts System [Frantzis' system], the three levels would generally correspond to the following Qigong programmes [neigong/qigong sets]: Foundation would be Dragon and Tiger, Opening the Energy Gates, and the Marriage of Heaven and Earth. Power Production Practices are Spiralling Energy Body and Bend the Bow. Then the Integration Practice is Gods Playing in the Clouds. […W]hat of defines each of these levels?

> Cavel: […] In the Foundation, you're building all the key components, not just in the physical motion but also in the neigong that you're using. The real essentials like alignments, breathing, stretching your tissues, opening and closing, twisting of the soft tissues, and you have these layers that are basically in every Qigong, all Tai Chi and all Bagua [a Daoist martial art].

> […] So the Foundation Practices prepare the body for everything that's gonna come in the Power Production and the Integration Practices. And if you don't do enough work with the Foundation, then when you come to the Power Production and you really start amping up the internal pressures

251

and the chi running through your channels, you have the possibility of causing yourself some problems and unless that is really clean in your body, the chances of integrating the whole neigong into one thing is absolutely impossible. So this is why I split it into these three layers.

Thus, as already seen with the linear/circular/spherical stages, the shift from the Being to the Becoming, and the merging of mind and body, progresses through three different degrees. In turn, once sedimented, each degree brings about emergent properties and thus opens up access to novel ways of knowing and acting in the world. This reasoning would also explain the popular discourse of DIA as practices underpinned by jealously kept secrets. As explained by Cavel (Kleiman, 2014a):

> Cavel: –when I say oh the, the secrets. They're not secret because nobody will tell you unless you are the special or the chosen one, yeah? They're secrets because until you go in your body and you actually put it in your body, the next piece will not show itself, it won't come alive inside of you. So this is why it's a secret; you can tell everybody everything, and there's people around they can talk till the cows come home about all the different stuff within the– within the material, but you ask – them to show you something and their practice is really poor. So there's a disconnect here: when a person who's training really trains, and then at some point in their training things start to gel and integrate, the next level of information, the next level of that training starts to present itself and then they come to you with the question, 'oh, well I'm getting this happening in my practice now', and you go 'great!' – now you know they've actually embodied what you've previously taught them, and that's the precise moment that you drop the next piece in or you explain the different levels of… because now they're very receptive and the foundation can take it on board.

In the shifting process from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment, analytical distinctions/experiential dimensions are pragmatically employed in a way that each neigong set is carefully designed to assemble the neigong components in a peculiar fashion according to one's contingent needs and training goals, while the Gods plays the role of integration *par excellence*. In fact, here integration might be conceptualised as the envelopment of all these dimensions/categories in a non-dualist context where they disappear from the practitioner's phenomenological field or are re-lived in a non-dichotomous/non-linear manner – as Brian (Diary

– Gods Playing in the Clouds class – 17th March 2016) said during a Gods class, 'integration is feeling everything at once and as one'.

On this ground, embodiment is fundamentally conceptualised as a process wherein the different configurations of the several elements involved yield different embodied outcomes and related emergent properties. In relation to the 16 neigong components (see chapter 7.1.1), Cavel (2013) reiterates the above points by using the metaphor of a Moroccan carpet where a number of coloured threads can be assembled in a variety of ways:

> There's 16 neigong and when you get the whole package together in Gods Playing in the Clouds they're all present. Now if you go to a Moroccan bazaar or someplace of this nature, and you see all these carpets and you see all these blankets, and they're basically made out of 6 or 8 coloured threads, but there are many many patterns, there are many many different carpets. Yes? When you get 16 threads, there are many ways you can weave them together. OK? And through these different weaves, the neigong content produces xing-yi, tai chi, bagua, meditation. Yes? It's not that one has something the other doesn't, it's more of the blend. Now if you take 4 ingredients – flour, butter, sugar, eggs – depending on the quantity of those ingredients you can have a very light sponge or you can have a really dense heavy cake. No difference, only the quantities and ratios.
>
> So your alignments and your open and closings and your breathings – these are the ingredients, and weaving these together in different ways will make a very different practice. Yes? It can make you feel extremely different – I mean, extending your soft tissues very gently and getting a really strong pulse in the body has a completely different feeling to it to really lengthening open the soft tissues to your maximum comfort zone and having a light pulse underneath it. Just those two alone can make the body feel very different. So as you're going through your neigong and as we're going through the different elements in the neigong, just try and understand this: it's not that this one's better than that one, or that one's better than this one; they're unique, they give you different flavours, and as um… it's quite often put over: if you can eat ice cream every day of your life you'll soon get bored if the only flavour is vanilla.
>
> The purpose of the different neigong sets is so that you can develop your body at different times in different ways for different needs. So, if for instance you land a job, a very high-powered job, really

stressful, lots of tension, then you're gonna want to weave your neigong, it doesn't matter what the physical motion is that you're doing, you're gonna want to weave your neigong to such a degree of getting a lot of water into the practice, to quench the fire in your nerves. That's gonna be your high priority. And yet, if you have a motorcycle accident and you're lying on the road and you're not bleeding, there's nothing broken internally or externally, but you've just had one hell of a smash, then pulsing all your joints and cavities to start clearing those, that condensed chi in your body, out of you, is a very handy practice to have. And if you pull… if you pull a ligament in your spine, if you slip a disc, then having merge of Heaven and Earth to initially open up the ligaments of the spine and then Bend the Bow Shoot the Arrow to strengthen those ligaments is a very handy practice to have. Yes?

Here no thread is more important than another (or, none of the experiential dimensions of embodiment is an epiphenomenon), and each carpet is a pragmatic blend of the threads specifically combined together to bring about particular patterns, address contingent goals, and achieve specific embodied outcomes. However, and crucially, this organisation into degrees of integration/attunement must not be seen in a hierarchical way, but rather in an interdependent fashion. As explained by Frantzis (2006/1993: 237):

> The order of the 16 neigong components is not fixed or linear, only descriptive. Each component forms a segment of a circle. Just as there is no beginning or end point of a continuously rotating circle, neigong has neither a beginning nor end. Each component catalyzes and influences the others. Every time you revisit any of the components, it becomes possible to attain a deeper, more fulfilling and beneficial level within the component itself and those that precede and follow it.

In this way, and according to the primacy of a circular logic, without a solid sedimentation of lower degrees of integration, it is not possible to progress to deeper levels and thus yield the emergent properties attached to particular modes of embodiment. This is reiterated by Cavel (Kleiman, 2014a) when he conceives of the different degrees as climbs or plateaus, and makes a contrast between a ladder and a pyramid, arguing in favour of the utility of the latter metaphor, and thus stressing a non-hierarchical interpretation of the DIA system where there is a dynamic and

254

circular co-determination between the different plateaus – here, the higher the apex of the pyramid, the wider the foundation needed to sustain it:

> Cavel: So you have climbs and plateaus. So you climb to a certain point, what you can take on board, and then you have this plateau and for a while you're practicing that, you're trying to get it online, you're embodying it, you're, you're playing with it you're taking it apart again and again and rebuilding it and you just keep playing with that for a period of time until you feel that you know you've done what you can do with that. Then don't think about going to the next level, go back to the beginning, go back to the foundation material, run through your foundation material again, come back up to that level that you're at, that plateau you are working at, and then take the next step up the ladder. And then you plateau again and you work that, and when that gets solidified and embodied to some degree, to whatever you can do, then come all the way back to the beginning again and go through that process […] Because every step you go up the ladder, when you go back to the beginning, you find material that you' haven't actually solidified at the base level. And this is why you should look at it as a pyramid rather than a ladder […] Because that pyramid, the base of that pyramid is really wide and really deep to get the apex to reach the sky. And that's a lot of material on the base level.

In the next extract, Cavel further elaborates these arguments by describing a foundational neigong set employed to build up symmetry: Cloud Hands. Cavel's (ibid.) explanation shows how the metaphors of the pyramid with a solid foundation and of integration are literally incarnated in the legs and body of the practitioner:

> Cavel: –if you look at Cloud Hands, for instance, you have a, a systematic build, you have a... the alignments, and then you have a weight shift, you have a turning in the body, and so all of those things need to be built in individually, before you even think about your arms, because as soon as you put the arms on and you move from the arms basically it's gonna leave behind the legs and the spine and all the good work downstairs. So you need to really focus on getting your weight shift clean and smooth and now when you're focusing on that one single component, you will start to notice where your body's stiff, which side of your body's more flexible than the other; which side is easier to receive your weight, which one's more difficult; you'll notice that you can really root

better in one leg than the other; you'll notice that certain tissues in one hip or the other hip will be tighter; and therefore in just doing the weight shift not only do you notice these things, but as you focus in deeper and you control your movement you start to release those tensions from your body, and you actually gain the benefit that you're looking for from the exercise […] And then you bring the arms in, and you learn the arms independently, and then you put it all together, and suddenly your Cloud Hands is a very different animal. So it's this systematic approach and really focusing and honing in on the one thing you're doing whether that one thing is a single component or whether that one thing is combining some components together or whether that one thing is the whole movement.

Finally, I wish to conclude by re-emphasising the mere functional use of the notion of degrees, as the number or type one chooses to use is arbitrary and instrumental to specific needs and contextual goals. As he points out that analytical categories are always enveloped in a wider non-dualist context and thus highlights the ontological primacy of a non-linear/circular, or, better, spherical logic in DIA, I will employ Cavel's (Kleiman, 2013d) words once more to support my contentions:

> Cavel: So it's just this big melting pot and we come up with these models of Foundation, Power Production, Integration or beginning, intermediate, advanced, whatever it is and it's all there just to give a conceptual framework for you to look at it. But there's various models and maps you can make through the neigong but the neigong is basically a sphere, and when you're in the sphere, you can go in any direction and develop any particular component and the point is to get to every part of the sphere and to integrate it into one coherent whole. That is the 16 neigong, unifying the entire body, energy, mind into one coherent whole.

Thus, in DIA the either/or, linear, and dichotomous logic of the Being is a tool to achieve the paradoxical/spherical/non-dichotomous logic of the Becoming – again, the aim is to envelop the Being within the Becoming, and obtain the phenomenological disappearance of dualism(s). To achieve this aim, the notion of degrees is employed as a further analytical tool to account for the causal powers of the experiential dimensions of embodiment and the emergent properties attached to the different modes according to which one can get to know and act in the world.

Additionally, the notion of degrees also functions as an antidote to the reification of each experiential dimension and the consequent neat and dualistic divides. That is, it is not only the shift from the Being to the Becoming that can be conceived of in terms of degrees, but also the shift from the phenomenological salience of one experiential category to another, or the attunement between the different dimensions of embodiment. For example, we have seen how the mind and body can be considered in a more nuanced fashion by adding the spiritual dimension (see chapter 5.5), or, to the linear and circular logic, we have added a spherical one (see chapter 7.1.1).

To further develop the above arguments, and complete my sketch of a re-conceptualisation of embodiment, I will revisit the notion of degree from a theoretical perspective and show that Spinoza too envisages the shift from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous form of embodiment according to a tripartite categorisation – i.e., what he calls the three kinds of knowledge of imagination, reason, and intuition. In this way, Spinoza conceives of processes of individuation according to different degrees of complexity, each endowed with its own emergent properties and power of acting. What follows below will additionally shed more light on the ways analytical categories/experiential dimensions are engaged with by Spinoza, so that the affects and the tacit knowledge of the body can be seized by, rather than bypass, our conscious deliberations.

12.2 Spinozian Degrees of Individuation

A further conceptual outcome of the reassessment of the hierarchy between mind and body proposed by Spinoza appears to be close to the positions endorsed by some new materialist strands where all matter is somehow seen as animate (see chapter 4.1). That is, Spinoza's conceptualisation of the mind-body relationship entails that not only the human body (or any living body), but all bodies (also non-living ones) – i.e., all 'things' – are endowed with a phenomenological field, or a certain degree of cognition, proportionate to their degree of

individuation. As Spinoza (1996/1994: 40, EIIP13S) points out, "the things we have shown so far
[…], though in different degrees, are nevertheless animate".

However, differently from many contemporary materialisms or material-semiotic sociological
theories such as actor-network theory, for Spinoza, such preposition does not imply erasing the
qualitative differences between living and non-living beings, or neglecting altogether the agentic
powers of our phenomenological world. Here, the different degrees according to which we get to
know and act in the world, that is, the different degrees of individuation and emergent properties
of modes of embodiment, can vary enormously, to the extent of constituting an embodied agent
with a sense of self, reflexive abilities, and a greater capacity to bring about novelty in the world
(Stenner, 2008). Spinoza's theorising here is once more utterly consistent with the notion of
autopoiesis.

In fact, Maturana and Varela (1980/1972; 1998/1987) distinguish different orders of autopoietic
systems, or as they also put it, different 'embodiments of autopoiesis'. While a cell is a first-order
autopoietic system, systems which include more cells – metacellular organisms – constitute
second-order autopoietic systems. For Maturana and Varela (1980/1972: 109), "[a]n autopoietic
system whose autopoiesis entails the autopoiesis of the coupled autopoietic unities which realize it,
is an autopoietic system of higher order". In other words, second-order autopoietic systems are
systems where a recurrent interaction – i.e., coupling – involves also two first-order autopoietic
systems, rather than only an autopoietic system and the surrounding environment.

Following this reasoning, when coupling occurs between two or more metacellular organisms,
third-order autopoietic systems arise. As explained by Maturana and Varela (1998/1987: 180-181,
original emphasis), "[w]hen this happens, the co-drifting organisms give rise to a new
phenomenological domain, which may become particularly complex when there is a nervous
system". Thus, higher-order autopoietic systems can generate emergent phenomena such as the
social (ibid.: 195) and cultural (ibid.: 201) domains, as well as language within which "there is no
limit to what we can describe, imagine, and relate" (ibid.: 212) – indeed, human embodiment itself

emerges in a co-determinate fashion with these novel phenomenological domains (ibid.), according to a circular logic.

Hence, similarly to what we have encountered in DIA, to be integrated into the Spinozian psychophysical system, we have here a simple yet useful conceptual device – that of *degrees*. The more complex the configuration of the body, the more complex is that of the mind, and the more complex are the related emergent properties. As reiterated by Hampshire (1996: ix):

> In Spinoza's metaphysical vision all things are in a sense, and in different degrees, animated. The important qualification is 'in different degrees' […] There is a scale of complexity in the mental domain […] matching the scale of complexity among physical objects. A human body, and particularly a brain, is an extraordinarily complex thing, and Spinoza remarks that its powers are still unknown.

Importantly, by adopting the concept of degrees we can avoid sharp Cartesian ruptures, such as anthropocentric and hierarchical perspective of the world where humans are the only beings endowed with 'soul', separating them from the rest of nature. Instead, without any drastic gap between humans and non-humans, and between living and non-living things, here we have different degrees of cognition paralleling the different degrees of bodies' configurations within the actualisation of the one and the same substance. Moreover, evoking the DIA system as explained by Cavel, each degree of individuation is built on the others in a non-hierarchical way. For instance, if we wish to reason again in biological terms, emergent phenomena like our capacities for deliberation can only occur thanks to processes taking place at the cellular level of neurons (Maturana & Varela, 1980/1972; 1998/1987).

That said, however, to address in a more direct manner this thesis' interest with changes in modes of embodiment, we need to narrow our focus onto how the degrees of organisation of a body and the degrees of awareness attached to it can significantly vary also *within* the same processes of individuation. Put another way, in what way can we conceptualise the shift from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of human embodiment according to different degrees?

12.2.1 Degrees of Engagement with the World – The Three Kinds of Knowledge

As we have seen with DIA, reasoning in terms of degrees appears to be a useful strategy to map out different modes of embodiment and the related ways we get to know and act in the world. The usefulness of this strategy is acknowledged across many traditions. In addition to Maturana and Varela's biological perspective, also philosophers like James, Simondon, and Whitehead conceive of different degrees of individuation.

As noted by Stenner (2011: 117), for example, for James "originally chaotic pure experiences gradually differentiate over time into more orderly grades". According to James, more complex experiences build on more elemental ones by means of what is fundamentally a process of creative addition which at a higher order generates emerging properties, such as conceptual categorisations or reflexive deliberations (ibid.). James distinguishes four main degrees of knowledge: energetics, percepts, concepts, and discourse, with the latter being the highest-order degree of individuation (ibid.).

In a similar vein, Simondon theorises the qualitative changes in the world – i.e., its "emergent organisation" (1992: 311) – by distinguishing "different regimes of individuation as providing the foundation for different domains such as matter, life, mind and society" (ibid.: 311-312). For Simondon, (ibid.: 312), "[t]he separation, the gradation and the relations of these domains appear as aspects of individuation according to its different modalities". As Simondon (ibid.: 311, original emphasis) explains, he intends "to study the *forms, modes and degrees of individuation* in order to situate accurately the individual in the wider being [Becoming] according to three levels of the physical, the vital and the psychosocial".

As observed by Stenner (2008: 103), for Whitehead too, there are "a variety of grades of actual occasions of experience. These grades correspond to a variety of levels of coordinated complexity, each level building upon and presupposing the others". It is within this perspective that, in Stenner's (2008: 105) words, "the human being is capable of what Whitehead calls outrageous

novelty". Whitehead identifies six levels of actual occasions, rising from the subatomic world, through inorganic aggregates, unicellular organisms, vegetable kingdom, non-human life, up to the higher-order complexity of human existence, where more composite actual occasions bring about the phenomenological dimensions we experience as "'the psyche', 'interiority' and 'self-identity'" (Stenner, 2008: 105).

Moreover, Whitehead (1985/1978) distinguishes between three kinds of knowledge: causal efficacy, presentational immediacy, and symbolic reference. Causal efficacy is the lowest-order and yet most immediate form of experience, which is formed out of past sedimented experiences (ibid.). As such causal efficacy is a taken-for-granted and thus ineffable experience which tends to escape conscious awareness (ibid.). However, it provides the basis for, and the continuity between, all our experiences. It is on this form of experience that the sense perception of presentational immediacy is built (ibid.).

In symbolic reference the sensory perceptions of presentational immediacy are taken as symbols by means of an act of abstraction (ibid.). As for the DIA practitioner, for Whitehead, the abstractions of the symbolic world can also be illusionary and mistaken (ibid.). By employing Magritte's 'Ceci n'est pas une Pipe' artwork as example, Stenner (2011: 126) elucidates Whitehead's point well when he says that "symbolism does, of course, admit of error: we risk no error in reporting that we see a roundish patch of brown elongated on one side, but we can be wrong if we correlate this with an energetic object and say we have seen 'a pipe'". Whitehead's three types of knowledge lead us to Spinoza's similar categorisation.

Like a DIA practitioner, Spinoza (1996/1994) conceives of the journey from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment according to three main stages – three degrees according to which the embodied agent engages with the world – which he calls kinds of knowledge. These are imagination (*imaginatio*), reason (*ratio*), and intuition (*scientia intuitiva*) (ibid.). The first – imagination – can in turn be divided into random/vague experience (*experientia vaga*) and experience from signs (*experientia ex signis*) (Garrett, 2010). Random/vague experience is a type

of knowledge that relates to sense perception. In Spinoza's (1996/1994: 57, EIIP40S2) words, this is when we perceive the world:

> [F]rom singular things which have been represented through us through the senses in a way which is mutilated, confused, and without order for the intellect […]; for that reason I have been accustomed to call such perceptions knowledge from random experience.

However, imagination does not need to be thought of as a 'natural'/naïve form of knowledge of the world (Hallett, 1957). As has been long acknowledged, our senses are not socially and culturally untouched. That is, social and cultural domains shape our view of the world, including our sense perception (Ingold, 2011; Pink, 2009; Shilling, 2005) – we sense (or do not sense) our world through a social and cultural filter. In a similar vein, Spinoza notes that we experience the world through words and ideas inhabiting our society and culture, those which he calls 'signs'. In this way imagination is an experience shaped by signs. Again, in Spinoza's (1996/1994: 57, EIIP40S2) own words, this is when we perceive the world:

> [F]rom signs, for example, from the fact that, having heard or read certain words, we recollect things, and form certain ideas of them, like those through which we imagine the things […]; these two ways [i.e., experience from senses and experience from signs] of regarding things I shall henceforth call knowledge of the first kind, opinion or imagination.

In this way imagination is the lowest-order kind of knowledge – Spinoza calls it imagination precisely because it makes us imagine things which do not exist. At the same time, however, imagination constitutes the foundation of our way of getting to know and acting in the world, the kind of knowledge which we need to tap into to shift our mode of embodiment. In fact, imagination could be conceived of as a lower-order degree of the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment of the Becoming, as with this kind of knowledge we do not distinguish between the mind and the body, the subject and the object, or the inner and outer. Resembling what philosopher John Dewey (2012) calls unintelligent habits – i.e., habits unable to deal with, and bring about, novelty – this is the form of knowledge mostly salient in our everyday tasks, when we neither

employ our reflexive capacities nor engage in particularly demanding performances, and therefore act in an 'automatic' mode.

The above can be clarified by using the example of an activity many of us have experience with: driving a car on a familiar route. If I am an experienced driver and I am driving on the route I take every day to go to work, I engage with such activity in a non-dichotomous manner: I do not experience myself, the car, my hands and feet, the steering wheel, the gears, the pedals, and indeed the road itself, as separate entities. In fact, I can become unaware of the activity itself and be absorbed in the music played on the stereo or in my inner conversations planning my next meeting, and having therefore the mode of the Being operating in the background. This 'autopilot' form of embodiment is what I call lower-order Becoming. Of course, this mode can quickly shift when something unexpected occurs: the road is interrupted as something has happened – the Being now becomes the prevalent mode, and I analytically deliberate on the course of action by using the second kind of knowledge of reason.

Reason is a functional yet somehow disembodied and fictive kind of knowledge. By means of reason we seem to be able to detach ourselves from our contingencies and from our body. This allows us a view from above, an abstract perspective, from where things appear to us as frozen, lifeless, and separated from one another. Dewey (ibid.: 75-76) appears to explain well both the functionality and fictivity of reason, which he calls deliberation:

> Deliberation is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible actions are really like. It is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action would be like if entered upon. But the trial is in imagination, not in overt fact. The experiment is carried on by tentative rehearsals in thought which do not affect physical facts outside the body.
>
> […]
>
> Deliberation means precisely that activity is disintegrated, and that its various elements hold one another up.

263

Consistent with the above, here the either/or logic of the Being is dominant as, according to Spinoza, by employing reason "[w]e represent things by seeing them in an explanatory network" (Della Rocca, 2008: 35). Every time we are immersed in abstract thought, we are knowing the world according to the second kind of knowledge of reason.

In the Dutch philosopher's project it is reason which plays the crucial role of addressing affects' dynamics – in Spinoza's words (1996/1994: 160, EVpreface, original emphasis):

> *I shall treat of the power of reason showing what it can do against the affects, and what freedom of mind,* or *blessedness, is. From this we shall see how much more the wise man* [sic] *can do than the ignorant.*

By providing us with an adequate knowledge of what relations, and what experiential dimensions/analytical categories, are at stake in a particular embodied encounter, reason enables us to arrange encounters which yield actions rather than passions (Deleuze, 1988).

Here Spinoza resorts to this kind of knowledge in a manner very similar not only to a DIA practitioner when she aims at bringing about changes in her embodied dispositions, but also to a social scientist engaged in a sociological analysis. That is, Spinoza employs reason to understand the agreements or disagreements between bodies and minds, the relationships between the attributes and the modes, or the patterns of affections and affects involved in embodied social encounters (Deleuze, 2013/1992: 280; see also chapter 11.2.2). Deleuze (1988: 56, original emphasis) reiterates the above effectively when he explains that for Spinoza:

> Reason is: 1. an effort to select and organize good encounters, that is, encounters of modes that enter into compositions with ours and inspire us with joyful passions (feelings that *agree* with reason); 2. the perception and comprehension of the common notions, that is, of the relations that enter into this composition, from which one experiences new feelings, active ones this time (feelings that *are born* with reason).

Once more, it is by means of reason that we can seize the affects and turn them from passions to actions. Again in Deleuze's (1988: 82, original emphasis) words:

> The second kind [of knowledge] is defined by the common notions, that is by the composition of relations, the effort of reason to organize the encounters between existing modes according to relations that agree with one another, and either the *surpassing* or the *replacement* of passive affects by active affects that follows from the common notions themselves.

A typical example of the usefulness of reason is the capacity to distinguish a 'good' joy from a 'bad' joy – i.e., a joy which is an action from a joy which is a passion. Although joy is always experienced by us as a positive affect, it can however have negative connotations which ultimately decrease our power of acting – it can disagree or not be attuned with reason, and therefore be a passion. A passion springing from joy is, for instance, lust, where we are passive in relation to the object of our joy (Spinoza, 1996/1994: 112, EIIIP59XLVVIII).

A more trivial instance in this respect is, once more, provided by the example of the sunrays hitting my body. If my encounter with the sunrays when I am cold might generate 'good' affections and the 'good' affect of joy at the first level of knowledge of imagination (as the warmth of the sun is certainly pleasant), it is however by employing the second level of knowledge of reason that I can understand that, despite being, let us say, a cold April day, sunrays can be strong enough to burn my skin, and that I should therefore either retire to the shade or use a sun protection cream. Here, it is by means of reflexive deliberations that we can actively change our embodied dispositions, purposely achieve what is 'good' for us, and increase our power of acting.

Yet, albeit functional, the detached view of reason from above is ultimately fictive and limited – we cannot fully transcend our embodied condition. That is, resembling DIA instructors' warnings, while for Spinoza the second kind of knowledge is necessary to access the third, if misconceived as the most fundamental kind of knowledge, it can lead to a disembodied and passive apprehension of the world – that which indeed very much resembles Descartes', and which ultimately decreases rather than increases our power of acting. In fact, ultimately, Spinoza's reason is neither disembodied nor transcendental, but rather fundamentally embodied and relational. In the words of Ilyenkov (2014/1977: 26, original emphasis; in relation to Aristotle rather than Spinoza, see also Burkitt, 2002):

265

__The capacity of a thinking body to mould its own action actively to the shape of any other body__, to coordinate the shape of its movement in space with the shape and distribution of all other bodies, Spinoza considered to be its distinguishing sign and specific feature of that activity that we call 'thinking' or 'reason'.

Indeed, the degree of individuation, the degree of idiosyncrasy, that is, the degree of agency or power of acting of the embodied subject in relation to her circumstances, ultimately depends on her capacity to relate to other bodies and minds – it is proportionate to her capacity to affect, and be affected by, other bodies and minds. As explained by Lenz (2017: 10), for Spinoza:

> [H]uman freedom is not an all-or-nothing affair but a gradual matter; it rises and falls with increase or decrease of power of persistence. Taking freedom as a gradual notion ranging between the complete self-determination of God and the degrees of human bondage, the original definition cited above can be taken as a maximal standard that is consistent with quantifying different degrees of freedom in beings that are merely part of God.

Similar to the Daoist tradition, here agency is a matter of attunement between the embodied agent and the world (or God or Nature, in Spinozian terms) according to different degrees.

And in fact, for Spinoza, reason can only allow a certain degree of this attunement. As explained by Hallett (1957: 80), for Spinoza, the highest-order degree of knowledge is intuition:

> *Imaginatio* itself is rooted in intuition, though by reason of its unwitting eccentricity of projection under finite self-reference, the individuals ostensibly perceived exhibit their real natures as greatly confused, fragmented, divided and contorted. Under *Ratio*, their incorrigible factors are distilled, but at the cost of their finite individuality.

> The highest form of knowledge is instead what Spinoza originally called in Latin, *Scientia intuitiva* – intuition.

Intuition is the kind of knowledge with which we can appreciate the world not in the form of separate entities, but in its fundamental unity, including that of mind and body. Importantly, despite the fact that both could be defined as non-dichotomous modes of embodiment of the

266

Becoming, imagination and intuition differ greatly. Intuition is a way of engaging with the world which Dewey (2012) would associate with intelligent habits – habits capable of dealing with, and bringing about, novelty in the world. If imagination or *Imaginatio* – the first kind of knowledge mainly based on senses and hearsay – was a poor and passive degree of the Becoming, intuition or *Scientia Intuitiva* is a richer and active degree of the Becoming, enriched by the Being[20] and characterised by increased power of acting and creative capacities. For Deleuze (2013/1992: 304, original emphasis), Spinoza's "third kind of knowledge thus has no other *formal cause* than our power of action and of understanding, the power of thinking, that is, of God himself, insofar he is explicated through our own essence".

In other words, here we have a higher-order degree of attunement between the embodied agent and the world to the point that there is in fact no distinction between the two at the phenomenological level. Again in Deleuze's words, when "we leave behind the second kind of knowledge, and enter into a new state" (2013/1992: 299) we are into "the domain of expression" (ibid.: 291) where there is univocity between the world's and the individual's self-actualisation. Of course, this type of knowledge too, is inextricably linked to the affects, in particular to the affect which Spinoza calls *blessedness*, an embodied disposition of permanent joy, where one become fully aware of the ultimate unity of mind and body (Fløistad, 1972), and which, as put by Deleuze, "giv[es] us the experience of being eternal" (1988: 58) and "the very feeling of God". (2013/1992: 308). Overlapping with Daoist concepts like *wu wei*, emptiness, or Dao itself (see chapters 5.5, 7.1, & 12.1), with blessedness, the affects "are no longer defined by an increase of our perfection or power of acting but by the full formal possession of that power of perfection" (Deleuze, 1988: 51, original emphasis).

On this ground, either/or logic, reason, and abstraction – the bedrock on which the Ethics are built – are necessary but not sufficient instruments for Spinoza's aim of human freedom (Savan, 1972).

---

[20] In fact, Spinoza's intuition, or what I call higher-order degree of the Becoming, could alternatively be conceived of as an integration of the Becoming and the Being, if this conceptualisation might be more useful to a theorist. However, I have opted to stick to the term Becoming to stress the non-dichotomous phenomenological connotation of this way of knowing and engaging with the world – indeed the higher-order degree of the Becoming is a conscious experience of the processual and relational nature of the world.

Once again, it is the second kind of knowledge which Spinoza employs throughout his works and it is the second kind of knowledge which I am employing right now to provide the reader with a sense of the third one. Ultimately, however, the reader's understanding of Spinoza's (as well as my) arguments would require a shift to the third form of knowledge, where language and binary logic – the instruments I am using here – become insufficient. In this respect, as already noted (see chapter 10.1), effectively conveying and re-presenting such a form of knowledge to academic and non-academic audiences is one of this research project's most challenging tasks.

Precisely working towards the accomplishment of such a goal, if the above arguments may sound abstract or indeed abstruse, I believe that, mimicking what occurs in DIA training, they can become clearer once similar non-dichotomous experiences can be evoked by means of metaphors and more familiar examples. In fact, instances of various forms of intuition are not as rare as they might seem. How many times, especially when we are immersed in nature, did we feel at one with it? (see Leder, 1990, for a phenomenological description, and Naor & Mayseless, 2017, for a psychological account). In terms of more complex ways of knowing and acting in the world, think, for instance, of professional athletes who, when performing, attain the mind-body unity of the Becoming – the notions of 'flow' or 'being in the zone' are often evoked in these contexts (see Stenner, 2014, for a psychosocial perspective, and Swann et al., 2017, for a more scientific approach).

In these instances there is no distinction between mind and body, subject and object, external and internal environment of embodiment, and the action the performer is engaged in, and the knowledge she employs, are grounded in, yet far exceed, her capacities for reflexivity. For example, a tennis player does not have the time to think or reason when she returns an over-a-hundred-mile-an-hour serve – she becomes one with her racquet, the ball, the other player, and the court. Likewise, during a Formula One race, the subject-object distinction between the driver, her car, the team, and the circuit disappears. The same applies to a master musician who becomes one with her instrument and the music played, or an actor who becomes the role itself. Similarly, within the more familiar academic circles, if a doctoral student is lucky enough, she might access

the Becoming when writing. A good piece of work will be written – or, perhaps more exactly, it will write itself – by employing a kind of action and knowledge which goes beyond the student's capacities for reflexivity.

To be sure, a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment is equally significant when we get to know and act in the world at the level of a lower-order degree of the Becoming – indeed our default condition. Yet, the examples provided above refer to higher-order degrees of individuation, requiring more complex sedimentations of affective patterns, those which can only be obtained with intensive, specific, and disciplined practice – the non-dichotomous mode of embodiment of someone driving on a familiar route to go to work and the Becoming of the Formula One driver strikingly differ, and certainly require a different type of training.

In fact, these professional performances – when playing tennis, playing an instrument, or acting – require a level of skilfulness involving years of training, where the consolidation of particular affects would be inconceivable without the extensive employment of reflexive deliberations (Burkitt, 2002). Hence, reflexive deliberations are crucial in the process of expanding our awareness of feelings and our ability to objectify them – feelings which otherwise would remain unrecognised. Cognition is, in other words, a necessary condition in the incorporation of any cultural practice (Shilling, 2017), and the representational can be, indeed needs to be, employed if one wishes to address a non-representational dimension.

All in all, the notion of degree is able to account for the different emergent properties attached to different modes of embodiment. Furthermore, the notion works well as an antidote to the reification of the categorisations one wishes to employ. In other words, we need to bear in mind that we are not conceptualising neat distinctions, but rather, pragmatically trying to orientate ourselves in the complexities of our phenomenal and processual world in order to target the tacit knowledge of the body, and bring about a dramatic shift in the way we get to know and act in the world.

In addition, it is equally important to remember that we continuously shift between different experiential dimensions, degrees of knowledge, and modes of embodiment. Here any categorising exercise has the mere functional purpose of understanding the patterns and dynamics involved in human embodiment and bringing about positive change within it. And, if taken as ontologically valid, would only have the effect of freezing any phenomenon analysed in a snapshot lacking any sign of dynamism – certainly an outcome unfaithful to the process-oriented ontology endorsed by the present research.

Conclusion – Dualism(s) Revisited

By asking to what extent the notion of embodiment has fulfilled its promise to bridge the mind-body gap, I revealed the subtle persistence of the Cartesian paradigm within the same theorising which aims at overcoming it. The outcome of this state of affairs is that mind and body are too often set in opposition or conflated, our phenomenological life appears to be neglected as an epiphenomenon, and external environments of embodiment tend to be over-emphasised. Something important, I felt, was missing, and I found myself asking: how can we retain a fundamentally process-oriented and relational framework, while accounting for the causal powers of our phenomenological life and individuated dimension? Or, to evoke the words of Stenner, how can we avoid throwing out the baby of our phenomenological life with the bathwater of the Cartesian worldview?

To find meaningful answers to these questions I have let two self-cultivation practices – Daoist Internal Arts and Spinoza's Practical Philosophy – engage in an iterative process of co-determination. Although the sketch of embodiment produced by this process is very much a work in progress, it does point to a significant re-conceptualisation of the term and of its relationship with the Cartesian paradigm. More specifically, there exist a range of non-dualist perspectives on human embodiment, from different geographical, historical, and conceptual traditions, which share a common ground suggesting revisiting dualism(s). That is, to be transcended, dualism(s), rather than being ignored, avoided, or denigrated, need to be engaged with.

In pursuing this path, my re-visitation of dualism(s) has taken place by means of three chief and interrelated conceptual steps, which constitute the common ground shared by both DIA and SPP. The first was an analytical distinction between experiential dimensions at the epistemological level and their reification as self-contained entities at the ontological level. The second was an analysis of embodiment grounded in two main modes of embodiment: the non-dichotomous Becoming and the dichotomous Being. The third was the envelopment of dualism(s) into a wider non-dualist context so that they are turned into dualities in unity.

Once these three steps are implemented, relationships like those between mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational, can be engaged with according to a principle of dynamic correspondence. Here, as their ontological unity is not fixed at the epistemological level, the terms of these relationships can be experienced as more or less attuned. In this way, there is neither opposition nor conflation of all the dimensions of embodiment, and none of the terms of these relationships acquires a privileged role or is disregarded as an epiphenomenon – all of them possess causal powers and analytical currency.

Overall, what emerges from the current study is a view of embodiment as a chiasmic, paradoxical, and multidimensional phenomenon, as a process located at the intersection of a pre-individual and an individuated dimension, an act of differentiation according to which the Becoming unfolds into the Being and what is only one substance expresses itself in its multiplicity by bringing about change in the world. It is in this way that embodiment is conceptualised as a dynamic process of individuation possessing a dual character – i.e., it is both open-ended and differentiated, many and one, process and structure, and pre-individual and individuated, continuously shifting between these modes.

Differently from many contemporary accounts, the multidimensional perspective suggested by the present research has elucidated how the engagement with our phenomenological world can tap into the tacit knowledge of the body, bring about radical transformations in one's mode of embodiment, and ultimately increase the embodied agent's capacities for agency. Indeed, for both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza, agency appears to be a matter of attunement between internal and external environments of embodiment – here, the more the embodied agent is attuned with the world, the more her power of acting is increased.

By putting forward the simple yet useful notion of degrees, I have furthermore emphasised the dynamism involved in the shift from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment, which is not a single event, but rather an ongoing and unfinished process, which is best thought of

as taking place according to different degrees of complexity. In contrast with a conflated/flat/one-dimensional perspective, here embodiment is a process of individuation which can be enacted according to different modes, each endowed with different emergent properties and capacities for agency.

In fact, each mode can also be analysed at different levels, thus providing the depth which is lacking in much contemporary theorising. For example, we have seen that the Becoming can be enacted at a lower-order degree – as with Spinoza's imagination, or at a higher-order degree – as with Spinoza's intuition. Here while both imagination and intuition are non-dichotomous modes of embodiment, they possess different properties, and greatly differ in the power of acting they can grant to the embodied agent.

Conceiving of modes of embodied knowledge and action in terms of degrees additionally provides an antidote to neat divisions between, or reifications of, experiential dimensions and analytical categories – including the Becoming/Being, ontological/epistemological, or empirical/theoretical distinctions, all of which have sustained the current study's rationale. They too must not be reified but, rather, instrumentally employed as useful categorisations.

Overall, being considered fictive yet functional, the analytical distinctions we have encountered are not rigidly fixed, and their categorisation and employment can vary according to the DIA practitioner's contingent training goals, or, more pertinently, the social theorist's specific analytical needs. To be sure, however, the above is not a call for an 'anything goes' theorising. Rather, although flexible, all the analytical categories are solidly grounded in an ontologically monist yet epistemologically pluralist theoretical framework, in the strategy of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context, and in the acknowledgement of the dual character of embodiment – i.e., in the common ground shared by a number of non-dualist perspectives of human embodiment.

Epilogue: TOWARDS A POST-CARTESIAN PERSPECTIVE

I believe that that the outcome of this thesis can constitute a fertile conceptual landscape on which to further develop a post-Cartesian perspective of embodiment. While there is no room here to discuss more extensively how this development could occur, a few observations can be made to provide a glimpse into what kind of contribution the current study offers to ongoing debates on embodiment and social theory. Therefore, below I will first make a number of brief theoretical considerations, and then discuss a recent publication on youth leisure practice to illustrate with a concrete example how the present study could help re-read and address contemporary social and cultural phenomena.

Two Different Logics: Conciliating Critical Realism with a Process-Oriented Ontology

One the main goals of this thesis was to establish a dialogue across different conceptual traditions within sociology and cultural studies. On this ground, the employment of two different logics – a linear and a circular logic – helped me to bring together what might appear distant standpoints. If, for instance, a typical critical realist approach emphasises the instrumental roles of analytical categories and our reflexive capacities, whereas new materialistic perspectives stress the significance of the non-representational and processual nature of our world, the present study has elucidated how the two views are not mutually exclusive but in fact complementary. In this respect, I suggest that, to avoid reductionisms when theorising and researching embodiment, both the Being (and a linear logic) and the Becoming (and a circular logic) are needed, with the former always enveloped by the latter. It is in light of this consideration that the case study unfolded by presenting each argument at both the theoretical (by employing the mode of the Being) and the empirical (by evoking the mode of the Becoming) level.

In addition, following Spinoza, the present study intends to *both* do justice to the causal powers of our conscious deliberations *and* acknowledge the primacy of the pre-reflective knowledge of the body. Put another way, the arguments of Archer or Giddens are not set in opposition to those of Bourdieu. As demonstrated by both the self-cultivation practices employed by the current research, recognising that the tacit knowledge of the body exceeds our conscious awareness does not need to imply that we cannot address and change our sedimented habits by means of our reflexive capacities. Moreover, as opposed to an interpretation of the habitus as reproducing extant realities in a vicious circle, I suggest that a view of embodiment as a process of individuation emphasises asymmetry and change rather than symmetry and stasis, while, however, accounting for both. In fact, I have qualified processes of individuation precisely as acts of differentiation which bring about novelty in the world.

Body Pedagogics and the Attunement between the Dimensions of Embodiment

While the current research offers further empirical evidence to the emergent sociological interest in Martial Arts and Combat Sports (MACS) and to debates on how such interest can in turn constitute a basis for wider health research (see Jennings, Forthcoming), I believe that a contribution more valuable in scope and content is offered to the body pedagogics approach to embodiment. We have previously seen that body pedagogics constitutes a multidimensional perspective intended to address culturally structured practices, and account for the means, experiences, and embodied changes involved in the reproduction, modification, or disappearance of these practices.

Precisely for its emphasis on avoiding one-dimensional and conflated analyses, for its attention to the relationships between pre-reflective and reflective types of knowledge and internal and external environments of embodiment, and for its latest call for a non-cognitivist conceptualisation of our conscious deliberations, body pedagogics has played a significant role in shaping the present research's rationale and constituting a solid ground on which to carry out empirical and

theoretical investigations. In this respect, the present study has consolidated and further developed the insights provided by studies within a body pedagogics ethos (for an account of these, see Shilling 2008, 2017, 2018), which demonstrates that, whether a practice relates to occupational, religious, sporting, or, indeed, self-cultivation contexts, the alignment or attunement of the different dimensions involved is crucial for such practice to be successfully incarnated and performed.

In addition, if the intertwinement between discursive and corporeal dimensions has long been acknowledged by extant research, the current study has delved deeper into the nature of the relationship between these experiential dimensions, which, as we have seen, is characterised by a principle of dynamic correspondence according to which the symbolic and carnal worlds can be more or less attuned. Or, seen from a different angle, the current study has provided a contribution towards our understanding of how certain discursive practices are taken on and become dominant while others are not, or how certain discourses are more successfully incorporated than others.

Engaging with our Phenomenological World and Grounding Analytical Categories in Experiential Dimensions

The significance of the attunement between different dimensions of embodiment reinforces an argument which we have already touched on in relation to James' radical empiricism: a theory of embodiment should be attentive to our phenomenological world (without, of course, falling into naïve positivism). As the present study has shown, what occurs at the level of our experiential dimensions strongly resonates with significant shifts in the ways the embodied agent knows and engages with the world. In other words, the above implies that the analytical categories one employs need to be grounded in the experiential dimensions of embodiment (see also Varela, 2000).

Consequently, following the examples of DIA practitioners and Spinoza, if one wishes to access the deeply ingrained tacit knowledge of the body, it seems advisable to endorse a multidimensional

perspective and account for the nuances involved in our experiential world. In fact, whether nuance is a virtue or not is one of the arguments discussed in recent debates on sociological theory (see Healy, 2017). In this respect, I argue that nuance *per se* is neither 'good' nor 'bad'. Rather, like the subtleties involved in DIA training or in Spinoza's project of human emancipation, nuance needs to be functional – i.e., able to provide the depth needed to tap into our phenomenological world (see also Mears, 2017).

In fact, the present research suggests that, although lived differently according to cultural and historical milieus, a number of experiential dimensions (again: mind and body, internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational) are constitutive features of human embodiment. In turn, these experiential dimensions are linked to analytical categories constituting dynamic relationships which, albeit in different guises, appear to have been sources of debate for millennia and are unsurprisingly still salient in contemporary body studies – as argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 6, original emphasis), "[o]ur conceptual systems are not totally relative and not *merely* a matter of historical contingency, even though a degree of conceptual relativity does exist and even though historical contingency does matter a great deal".

Here I have avoided both the impossible task of trying to 'solve' the issues related to these relationships and the sterile enterprise of deliberately ignoring them altogether. Instead, following the DIA practitioner's and Spinoza's pragmatic approaches, I have suggested 'dealing' with them. In fact, both the DIA practitioner and Spinoza have not only dealt with some of these problematics, but have in fact instrumentally 'exploited' these phenomenological relationships to obtain a shift from a dichotomous to a non-dichotomous mode of embodiment, and turn dualism(s) into dualities in unity.

In this way, the self-cultivation practices considered in the current research show that a theory of embodiment 'works' when, rather than only remaining on an abstract level, it can actually be incarnated, experienced, and lived – it is in this sense that, once more, analytical categories need to

be grounded in the experiential dimensions of embodiment. We know that the concepts and discourses advanced by a theory are performative – ideas, as Spinoza sustains, are mental actions, that are not less actual than material actions. Yet, the present research indicates that the capacity of concepts, discourses, and ideas to bring about change increases when they are able to be attuned with our phenomenological world and bodily being.

Applying the Dual Lens: The Example of Youth Leisure Practices

While all the above considerations are certainly implicated in most social and cultural dynamics, I wish to show how the outcome of the present research can enrich our understanding of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena by narrowing my focus to a recent publication by cultural criminologists Eleni Dimou and Jonathan Ilan (2018). Dimou and Ilan's aim is to show that subcultural and post-subcultural theories are not mutually exclusive, as each emphasises different dimensions of contemporary youth leisure practices – respectively a reflective and pre-reflective dimension. In this way, according to the authors, rather than being set in opposition, the two perspectives are complementary, and both are needed to avoid reductionist accounts of youth leisure practices.

In a nutshell, if subcultural theorists appear to grant a certain degree of 'resistance' and the possibility of political consciousness to youth leisure practices, post-subcultural theorists seem to be more sceptical on the matter and tend to dismiss these activities as mere forms of hedonism empty of any political content. Within these debates, Dimou and Ilan (2018: 2) argue that any youth leisure practice possesses proto-political implication as it is always endowed with novel pre-reflective experiences to which must correspond novel reflective experiences – in their words, "subcultural practice provides a host of alternative experiences that challenge dominant late-capitalist ideals and hold out a lived sense of existing differently". Hence, Dimou and Ilan contend that by offering access to alternative modes of embodiment, subcultural practice possesses a transformative potential and thus proto-political connotations.

I am very much in agreement with their propositions. In fact, supporting their arguments with the common ground shared by Spinoza and Gramsci, albeit implicitly, Dimou and Ilan adopt a theoretical framework consistent with that of the present study. However, I suggest that, re-read through the lens of the current research, their arguments can be both consolidated and further enhanced in terms of analytical purchase. In this respect, my re-reading intends to illustrate in what ways the post-Cartesian perspective proposed by this thesis could ameliorate our understanding of youth leisure practices and the dynamics of political resistance and apolitical defiance involved in them. Below, I first flag up the similarities between Dimou and Ilan's arguments and those of the current study, and then provide a snapshot of the productive possibilities involved in bringing to the fore the arguments advanced by the present research.

To begin with, citing Spinoza, Dimou and Ilan (2018: 7) reminds us that the "cognitive and the affective run in parallel", and therefore in any leisure practice both a reflective and a pre-reflective dimension are always involved. Moreover, as does the present research, they stress the primacy of the pre-reflective but, at the same time, do not dismiss the role of the reflective. In this way, Dimou and Ilan (ibid.: 15, my emphasis) resemble DIA instructors when, by citing Gramsci, they note that:

> Gramsci, after all made the argument that *the need for and means to change must be bodily felt not just intellectually understood*. In the absence of a contemporary ideology that provides the ideas and analysis that can harness and reflect the feelings that young people experience in their everyday lives to the extent that they are moved by it, simply dismissing their behaviour as apolitical and exclusively hedonistic risks over-simplifying what is occurring. It remains necessary for an ideology to emerge that can do this, and thus far neither academic intellectuals nor youth subcultures seem to have been successful in supplying this.

Therefore, like in DIA, rather than being a matter of mere intellectual understanding, here change is a matter of attunement between mind and body, discourse and corporeality, and feeling and movement. The distinction between internal and external environments of embodiment also appears to be salient for Dimou and Ilan (ibid.: 7, original emphasis) when they observe that

"Spinoza saw two modes of power operating within society: *potestas* (force from above which suppresses and limits the subject) and *potentia* (energy and potential, the inner force possessed by each individual human)". In this way, for Dimou and Ilan (ibid.: 9) "[y]outh subcultures continue to be a site of struggle where internal understandings of the self, meet external impressions of the Other".

Furthermore, Dimou and Ilan make a sophisticated analysis of the relationship between the affects and our agentic powers. By drawing on Spinoza's affects of joy and sadness, respectively linked to feelings of increase and decrease of the embodied agent's power of acting, they show that the pre-reflective affect of joy does not always yield an actual increase of one's capacities for agency – rather the opposite might often occur, and a feeling of empowerment can ultimately lead to defiance rather than resistance. To illustrate this point, Dimou and Ilan refer to a study carried out by Willis in the late seventies describing teenage boys (his so-called lads) experiencing joy and an apparent increase of their power of acting when laughing at their teachers and bosses. On commenting on Willis' research, Dimou and Ilan (ibid.: 14) argue that:

> [In] the absence of conscious forms of ideology that can galvanise and advance these proto-politics, they [i.e., pleasurable moments of subcultural leisure/practice] remain not as transformational movements, but as self-defeating modes of defiance. Defiance burns bright with a body-felt-sense of power but ultimately fizzles out. It differs from 'resistance' in that it is often not directed against a particular set of socio-economic principles, but is ultimately concerned with the momentary thwarting of a particular institution to generate a sense of power that is otherwise difficult to achieve (Ilan 2014, 2015). Defiant gestures by targeting surface, rather than root forms of perceived oppression ultimately do not threaten the status quo, and often simply reinforce or exacerbate the defiant individual's position within it. Consider the case of Willis [sic] (1977) lads who feel a power over the teachers they laugh at, only to find themselves years later performing similarly at the expense of their bosses as they take up semi/low skilled work.

Therefore, the affect of joy does not automatically grant an actual increase of our agentic powers. Like the empowering feeling I can experience when sunrays hit my unprotected skin on a cool

April day, ultimately joy can end up in a decrease of agency (see chapter 12.2.1). That is, if, in Spinozian terms, the affect of joy does not agree with reason, despite the pleasurable experiences initially involved, Willis' lads will not have changed their oppressed position, while I will be in pain with sunburn – i.e., both Willis' lads' and my power of acting will have decreased, rather than increased.

Overall, Dimou and Ilan (ibid.) suggest that youth leisure practices always need to be conceptualised as endowed with proto-political seeds, and that these seeds possess the potential of yielding political consciousness and action. Yet, as they note, this positive outcome does not always occur, and the analytical tools for understanding the conditions which can foster subcultural practices of resistance rather than defiance do not seem to be available. In the present study's terms, social and cultural theorists appear unable to understand in what ways a subcultural practice can constitute a ground where novel, non-dichotomous, and transformative lived experiences can be possible, emergent properties can be brought about, and, more importantly, the embodied agent's emancipation can take place.

In fact, well aware of this state of affairs, Dimou and Ilan (ibid.) point out the lack of a theory that is able to account for the different dimensions involved in youth leisure practices. Agreeing with them on this point, I contend that the theoretical framework sketched by the current study could contribute to ameliorating this deficiency. For instance, following Spinoza (and Gramsci), what would be the analytical advantage of enveloping dualism(s) in a wider non-dualist context and turning them into dualities in unity? In other words, what could be gained by taking into account the attunement and disattunement of the different dimensions of embodiment when conceptualising the shift from defiance and proto-political to resistance and political consciousness?

In what ways, for example, can political consciousness be attuned with or disattuned from the pre-reflective experiences of a subcultural practice? Or put another way, how can emancipative ideology, the political, and resistance actually be incarnated so that emergent properties can be

brought about? Albeit implicitly, Dimou and Ilan (ibid.: 6) ask these questions when citing Gramsci's call for the attunement of philosophy and action:

> One of Gramsci's principle concerns was praxis (human action), or the conversion of political ideology into social action/reality (1971, 321–377). His argument was that ideas alone could not motivate 'the masses' into opposing an unjust socio-economic order. Such a trajectory could only stem from a lived sense that the world can be different and that this could only emerge from within the everyday lives of ordinary people: 'the only 'philosophy' is history in action, that is life itself' (Gramsci 1971, 357).

And, to go back to Willis' lads' affect of joy, what role within youth leisure practices does a Spinozian reason play in the incarnation of resistance rather than defiance? Crucially, the reason of Spinoza in no way resembles the neo-liberal rationality associated with individualism, economic productivity, and self-interest. In fact, in Dimou and Ilan's (ibid.: 13) words, in subcultural practice "[r]ationality is made secondary to the embodied, sensory and affective". In contrast to dominant imperatives, the kind of reason I am discussing here is ultimately a fictive yet instrumental one, that related to the Being and the reflexive capacities employed to access the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming where change takes place.

Indeed, conscious deliberations are always involved in transformative subcultural practices as instruments to arrange embodied encounters and access alternative experiences – again, here the Being is instrumental to shift to the Becoming. In this respect, past research in youth leisure practice has shown that hedonism is always 'calculated' (Szmigin et al., 2008), 'fun' is always kept under a certain degree of control compatible with the appropriateness of the social context (Measham, 2004), and even the awareness of a state of intoxication – a phenomenon which might fall into a pre-reflective realm – can only be possible with the corresponding reflexive evaluation of a 'cultured normality' (Sulkunen, 2002). These 'calculations', I suggest, do not necessarily equate to neo-liberal rationality, but rather often aim at eschewing it.

And, of course, I do not intend to suggest a straightforward link between the mode of embodiment of the Becoming and political consciousness, emancipative action, or positive social change. Rather, bearing in mind how neo-liberal politics and the culture industry have appropriated consumers' affects and targeted pre-reflective knowledge (see Lash & Lury, 2007; Grainge, 2011), I am pointing out the need to unveil what can be an even more oppressive and effective appropriation – i.e., that of the non-dichotomous mode of the Becoming. In this respect, a particularly significant example is provided by cultural theorist Carolyn Pedwell (2014) when she notes how a non-dichotomous/non-individualistic affect *par excellence*, such as that of empathy, can be subtly mobilised to reinforce rather than threaten the status quo – an observation which also functions as a warning against contemporary celebrations of affect as a transformative, liberating, and emancipative force *per se* (see also Hemmings, 2005).

Due to space constraints, I am here unable to develop my arguments further, and I have only hinted at one of the possible uses of the present study's perspective of embodiment – a post-Cartesian approach which acknowledges two main ways of getting to know and acting in the world enacted according to different degrees, envelops analytical distinctions in a non-dualist context, and analyses the attunement or disattunement of the experiential dimensions constituting our phenomenological world. This is a perspective that, differently from a linguistic or affective approach, does not set in opposition mind and body. Furthermore, differently from 'flat' theories like ANT, it is an approach which, when mapping out the conditions fostering certain social phenomena, accounts for the depth involved in them and acknowledges the causal powers of our phenomenological world. In this way the embodied agent is not a mere passive and dependent subject but is also able to be active and independent in bringing about novelty in the world – i.e., she possesses a dual character.

There is no need to say that my ultimate concern is with the power relationships involved in being able to target the pre-reflective/non-representational/tacit knowledge of the body, shifts in modes of embodiment, and the transformative space of the Becoming. I contend that power – as both an emancipatory and oppressive force – is most effective when it is able to attune mind and body,

internal and external environments of embodiment, language and corporeality, and the representational and the non-representational. As my work in progress has only provided a sketch of a post-Cartesian perspective of embodiment, further research is needed, especially in terms of implementing the theoretical framework suggested here in concrete social and cultural phenomena. My hope is that the present study can trigger, inspire, and facilitate this type of research.

Appendices

Do you practise Tai Chi and/or Qigong?

If your answer is 'yes', please keep on reading below...

Hello, my name is Vittorio and I am a PhD sociology student at the University of Kent.

My research employs a case study of Eastern traditions of bodywork such as *Tai Chi* and *Qigong* to deepen our understanding of how our society and culture shape our body and the way we experience it. I am interested in *Tai Chi* and *Qigong* as a self-cultivation practices that addresses all those deeply sedimented habits that make our lives worse than they need to be. These Eastern traditions have already been researched from a sociological point of view, but have never been regarded as practices that can 'inform' sociology (rather than being 'studied by' sociology) – can these practices also 'teach' something to sociologists?

If you are an instructor or have been regularly practicing Tai Chi and/or Qigong, you are invited to participate in the study. If you choose to do so, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview with the researcher (myself). The interview will be an informal chat which is unlikely to last longer than one hour. I am interested in your views and opinions about, and experiences with, these Eastern practices. The interview can be carried out in person if you are within the Kent and London areas, or via Skype without the need to meet up.

If interested in taking part or wish to receive more information about my research please e-mail me at vg84@kent.ac.uk or contact me on 07503 845 667 – I look forward to hearing from you!

Pratichi Tai Chi e/o Qigong?
Se la tua risposta é 'sí', continua a leggere...

Ciao, il mio nome é Vittorio Giovine e sto conducendo una ricerca di dottorato all'Universitá del Kent. Per migliorare la comprensione di come la nostra cultura influenza il corpo ed il modo in cui esso é vissuto da noi (specialmente in relazione alla mente), la mia ricerca utilizza come caso di studio tradizioni orientali di lavoro sul corpo come il *Tai Chi* o il *Qigong*.

Queste tradizioni sono giá state oggetto di ricerca dal punto di vista sociologico ma non sono mai state considerate come pratiche che possono informare la sociologia (piuttosto che essere studiate dalla sociologia) – possono queste tradizioni orientali insegnare qualcosa anche ai sociologi?

Sia che tu hai da poco intrapreso la pratica del Tai Chi e/o del Qigong, oppure sei un maestro con diversi anni di esperienza, sei invitato/a a partecipare alla ricerca. Essere un partecipante significa prendere parte ad un colloquio con me che consiste semplicemente in una chiacchierata informale che difficilmente puo' durare piu' di un'ora. Io sono interessato al tuo punto di vista, alle tue opinioni e alle tue esperienze con queste pratiche orientali.

Se sei interessato/a a partecipare o se desideri ottenere piu' informazioni sulla mia ricerca puoi contattarmi all'indirizzo e-mail vg84@kent.ac.uk – attendo tue notizie!

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

Vittorio Giovine
vg84@kent.ac.uk

INFORMATION SHEET

Researching Embodiment, Embodying Research:

A Case Study of Eastern Traditions of Bodywork

My name is Vittorio Giovine and I am a PhD sociology student at the University of Kent. You have been invited to participate in a research study which aims to understand the ways our body shapes and is shaped by culture and society.

Background

In the last thirty years the body has increasingly acquired relevance in the research conducted in both the human and natural sciences. This is because the body and our senses are the primary means by which we experience, know, and act in the world. It is to everybody self-evident that without our body we could not have an identity, could not perform any action, and therefore could not take part in any cultural and social activity. The body is, in other words, what allows us to exist as persons and the medium for experiencing a world. However, it seems that the more we research our body the more slippery this object of study becomes. What can appear as very simple questions are in fact left unanswered: Are we our body? Or do we have a body? And what is the nature of the relationship between the body and the mind?

My research project intends to explore possible answers to these questions by taking into serious consideration how the body (and its relation to the mind) is conceived of within Eastern traditions. My training and experience as a Shiatsu practitioner have convinced me these 'energy work' approaches have much to offer to enhance our understanding of the body and the way we experience it. That is why I have also become interested in other practices stemming from a common Daoist root such as Tai Chi and Qigong. All these traditions have already been researched from a sociological point of view, but have never been regarded as practices that can 'inform' sociology (rather than being 'studied by' sociology) – can these Eastern traditions of bodywork be more than mere objects of investigation? Can they also 'teach' something to sociologists?

What types of data are being collected?

Whether you are someone who has recently decided to approach these Eastern Traditions (Tai Chi and/or Qigong) or are an experienced practitioner, you are invited to participate in the study. If you choose to do so, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview with the researcher (myself). The interview will be an informal chat which is unlikely to last longer than one hour. I am interested in your views and opinions about, and experiences with, these Eastern practices.

Of course, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions you will be asked to discuss and you are free to decline to answer any question or to end the interview at any time without giving any reason. The interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed, analysed using qualitative methods, and used in the content of this project.

What will happen on the day?

Once you have arrived, I will ask you to read and sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of the consent form signed by me. This will acknowledge that you consent to be a participant in

288

my research. Once you are happy for the interview to begin, I will switch on the recorder and record our conversation. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions at the beginning and at the end of the interview.

Will I be identifiable?

No. The interview will be transcribed only by me and I will ensure the transcript is anonymised so that any personally identifying information has been changed or removed. I will delete any recordings I have made once their contents are transcribed and anonymised. A pseudonym – which can either be chosen by you or given by me – will replace your name to identify your interview data.

How will the interview data be used?

Once anonymised, the data will be analysed for my research, and anonymised extracts from the data may be quoted in my research project and any publication and conference presentation arising from the study. The information you provide will be treated confidentially and personally identifiable details will be deleted. Agreeing to take part in this research means that you agree to this use of the information you provide. You are also encouraged to keep my e-mail address and contact me at the end of the study to find out about its outcome (I will invite you to retain a copy of this sheet as a reminder of the research and of my contact details).

How do I withdraw from the research?

You have the right to withdraw up to one month after the interview and without giving any reason. If you decide to withdraw from the research after participating in the interview, please contact me quoting the pseudonym we have agreed on.

Are there any risks involved?

There are no particular risks involved in this project, and you are free to decline to answer any question or to end the interview at any time without giving any reason. You may enjoy your experience of taking part in the interview and this can also be a moment of personal reflection on your experience of Tai Chi, or Qigong.

This research has been approved by the School of School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research Ethics Committee. If you wish to take part in the research, or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me at vg84@kent.ac.uk.

Please, keep this information sheet for your own records

Researching Embodiment, Embodying Research:
A Case Study of Eastern Traditions of Bodywork

Having read the information sheet of the PhD research project *Researching Embodiment: A Case Study of Eastern Traditions of Bodywork,* I give my consent to participate in the research. I understand that:

- I am participating in the interview on a voluntary basis and I am free to decline to answer any question or to end the interview at any time without giving any reason.
- My identity will be kept confidential and the information I provide will remain anonymous.
- My interview will be audio-recorded and a pseudonym will represent my data for anonymity and confidentiality.
- The interview will be transcribed by a PhD student (Vittorio Giovine).
- Only the researcher (Vittorio Giovine) will have access to the data in full.
- I can withdraw from the research up to one month after taking part in it without giving a reason by quoting my pseudonym.
- The extracts from the interview may be quoted in a PhD research project, academic publications, and presentations.

Name: …………………………………………

Signature: …………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………..

Signature of the researcher: …………………………………………

Project Researcher: Vittorio Giovine - vg84@kent.ac.uk

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Researching Embodiment, Embodying Research:

A Case Study of Eastern Traditions of Bodywork

How did you travel here today?

Where are you from originally?

Is Tai Chi (or Qigong) the only type of Eastern bodywork you have ever engaged in?

How long have you been practising (and/or teaching) Tai Chi (or Qigong)?

How did you first get into Tai Chi (or Qigong)?

What was your goal in starting this practice?

What do you remember about these first experiences with Tai Chi (or Qigong)?

Are you continuing with your practice or have you taken a break from your sessions? (Why?)

How do you prepare yourself for a Tai Chi (or Qigong) session?

How often do you practise and for how long?

How do you feel during a session?

How do you feel about your body during practice?

How does your body feel after the practice? How long does this feeling last?

How about your mind?

Is there any particular area of the body, or a particular movement or form, that elicits a specific feeling, emotion, or memory?

What is your favourite practice (movement or form) and why?

Do you use mental visualisations? Or perhaps metaphors (e.g., the waterfall)? If yes, in what way?

Do you stand? How does it feel? And for how long?

Have you experienced 'new feelings'? That is, feelings you have never experienced before? (e.g., sense of lightness, sense of dropping or releasing of a certain area of the body, etc.)

Can you describe this (or these) feeling(s) in some way? What about if you have to describe it/them in three words?

How long does this feeling last? When do you lose the feeling? Does it always follow the same pattern?

Have you become aware of parts of your body you were not once aware of? If yes, which ones?

Do you think you're more aware of what is going on inside your body since you started practising?

And what about outside of your body – have you become more aware of feelings 'outside' your body, or of areas/parts outside of your body?

Has the way you experience your body changed since you have been practising?

Has your experience of the relationship between you and the world around you changed since you have been practising?

Do you wear different clothes when you practice?

Where is the centre of your awareness (or gravity) when you practice?

Where is the centre of you awareness (or gravity) now?

Do you think that you can sleep better when you practice? Or since you have been practising?

Do you think that you have changed some of your habits since you started practising? If yes, which ones? And why (and/or how) do you think it has happened?

Do you think you're sleeping better?

Do you think that other people feel similarly about Tai Chi (or Qigong)? Have you ever talked to other people practising Tai Chi (or Qigong)?

Do you think that Tai Chi (or Qigong) has somehow changed the way you live/experience your body? If yes, in what way?

And how about your mind?

Do you think Tai Chi (or Qigong) has changed the way you carry out your routine tasks? Or perhaps some of your habits? If yes, in what way?

What is the impact of Tai Chi (or Qigong) on your wider life?

Do you think that your experiences with Tai Chi (or Qigong) have somehow changed the way you relate to other people, or to things happening in your life?

Do you think that Tai Chi (or Qigong) has changed you as a person? If yes, why do you think that has happened?

Does your teacher spend time explaining the correct execution of the movements? Does s/he spend time explaining the philosophy behind tai chi?

Do you work in pair with other practitioners? If yes, do you find it useful and in what way?

Can you recall a significant moment, movement, or experience?

Can you describe that with a word, colour, or a sound (musical instrument)?

With a drawing?

Are there any other things that we have not talked about that you feel are important to mention?

References

Adams, G. (2002). Shiatsu in Britain and Japan: Personhood, holism and embodied aesthetics. *Anthropology & Medicine, 9,* (3), 245-266.

Adkins, L. & Lury, C. (2011). Introduction: What is the empirical? *European Journal of Social Theory, 12,* (1), 5-20.

Althusser, L. (2001/1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In: L. Althusser (Ed.). *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Ansell-Pearson, K. (2017). Deleuze and new materialism: naturalism, norms, and ethics. In: S. Ellenzweig, & J. Zammito (Eds.). *The New Politics of Materialism: History, Philosophy, Science.* London: Routledge.

Archer, M.S. (2000). *Being Human: The Problem of Agency.* Cambridge: University Press.

Archer, M.S. (2007). *Making our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, M.S. (2010). Can reflexivity and habitus work in tandem? In: M.S. Archer (Ed.), *Conversations About Reflexivity.* Oxon: Routledge.

Back, L. (2007). *The Art of Listening.* Oxford: Berg.

Back, L. & Puwar, N. (2012). A manifesto for live methods. *The Sociological Review, 60,* (s1), 6-17.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Beaupre, C.P. (2011). Transformative learning and bioenergetics. *The International Journal of Science in Society, 2,* (4), 25-32.

Bell, C. & Newby, H. (1977). Introduction: The rise of methodological pluralism. In: C. Bell and H. Newby (Eds.). *Doing Sociological Research.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

Bendelow, G. (2010). The mind/body problem in contemporary healthcare. In: J. Fernandez (Ed.). *Making Sense of Pain.* Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.

Bidlack, B. (2006). Taiji quan: Forms, visions, and effects. In: L. Kohn (Ed.). *Daoist Body Cultivation.* Magdalena, NM: Three Pines.

Blackman, L. (2008). *The Body: The Key Concepts.* Oxford and New York: Berg.

Blackman, L. (2012). *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation.* London: Sage.

Blackman, L. (2013). Habit and affect: Revitalizing a forgotten history. *Body & Society, 19,* (2-3), 186-216.

Blackman, L. (2014). Affect and automaticy: Towards an analytics of experimentation. *Subjectivity, 7,* (4), 362-384.

Blackman, L., & Featherstone, M. (2010). Re-visioning body and society. *Body & Society, 16,* (1), 1-5.

Blackman, L., & Venn, C. (2010). Affect. *Body & Society, 16*, (1), 7-28.

Blackmore, S. (2010/2003). *Consciousness: An Introduction (2nd Edition).* Hoddereducation.com.

Bourdieu, P. (2014/1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brown, S.D., Cromby, J., Harper, D., Johnson, K. & Reavey, P. (2011). Researching experience: Embodiment, methodology, process. *Theory & Psychology, 21,* (4), 493-515.

Brown, D. & Leledaki, A. (2010). Eastern movement forms as body-self transforming cultural practices in the West: Towards a Sociological Perspective. *Cultural Sociology, 4,* (1), 123-154.

Brown, S. & Stenner, P. (2001). Being affected: Spinoza and the psychology of emotion. *International Journal of Group Tensions, 30,* (1), 81-106.

Burkitt, I. (1999). *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity*. London: Sage.

Burkitt, I. (2002). Technologies of the self: Habitus and capacities. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 32,* (2), 219-237.

Burman, E. (1994). Interviewing. In: P. Banister, E. Burman, I. Parker, M. Taylor, & C. Tindall (Eds.). *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal, 40,* (4), 519-531.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'.* London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1999/1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* Oxon: Routledge.

Carrington, B. (2008). 'What's the footballer doing here?' Racialized performativity, reflexivity, and identity. *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies, 8,* (4), 423-452.

Cavel, P. (2016). Cultivating sung in water method arts. *Inner Quest, February 2016*, 1-12.

Cavel, P. (2017). *The Tai Chi Space*. London: Aeon.

Chalmers, D.J. (1996). *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Channon, A. & Jennings, G. (2014). Exploring embodiment through martial arts and combat sports: a review of empirical research. *Sport in Society, 17,* (6), 773-789.

Clark, A. & Chalmers, D.J. (1998). The extended mind. *Analysis*, *58*, (1), 7-19.

Clough, P.T. (2008). The affective turn: Political economy, biomedia and bodies. *Theory, Culture, & Society, 25,* (1), 1-22.

Clough, P.T. (2009). The new empiricism: Affect and sociological method. *European Journal of Social Theory,12,* (1), 43-61.

Colebrook, C. (2004). *Gender*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.

Colombetti, G. & Thompson, E. (2008). The feeling body: Towards an enactive approach to emotion. In: W. F. Overton, U. Mueller, & J. Newman (Eds.). *Developmental Perspectives on Embodiment and Consciousness*. Oxon: Erlbaum.

Connell, R.W. (2010/1995). *Masculinities (2nd Edition).* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Coole, D., & Frost, S. (2010). Introducing the new materialisms. In: D. Coole, & S. Frost (Eds.). *New Materialisms*. London: Duke University Press.

Cromby, J., & Nightingale, D.J. (1999). What's wrong with social constructionism? In: D.J. Nightingale and J. Cromby (Eds.). *Social Constructionist Psychology: a critical analysis of theory and practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cromby, J., Newton, T. & Williams, S. (2011). Neuroscience and subjectivity. *Subjectivity, 4,* (3), 215-226.

Crossley, N. (1994). *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty*. Avebury: Ashgate Publishing.

Crossley, N. (1995). Merleau-Ponty, the elusive body and carnal sociology. *Body & Society, 1,* (1), 43-63.

Crossley, N. (2001). The phenomenological habitus and its construction. *Theory & Society, 30*, (1), 81-120.

Crossley, N. (2007). Researching embodiment by way of 'body techniques'. *The Sociological Review, 55,* (s1), 80-94.

Csordas, T.J. (1994). Introduction: The body as representation and being-in-the-world. In: T.J. Csordas (Ed.). *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Csordas, T.J. (2008). Intersubjectivity and intercorporeality. *Subjectivity, 22*, (1), 110-121.

Davidson, J. & di Gregorio, S. (2011). Qualitative research and technology: In the midst of a revolution. In: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Dimou, E. & Ilan, J. (2018). Taking pleasure seriously: the political significance of subcultural practice. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *21,* (1), 1-18.

de Freitas Araujo, S. (2012). Materialism's eternal return: Recurrent patterns of materialistic explanations of mental phenomena. In: A. Moreira-Almeida & F.S. Santos (Eds.). *Exploring Frontiers of the Mind-Brain Relationship*. New York: Springer.

de Saint-Georges, I. (2004). Materiality in discourse: The influence of space and layout in making meaning. In: P. LeVine & R. Scollon (Eds.). *Discourse and Technology*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Deleuze, G. (1988). *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.

Deleuze, G. (2013/1992). *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. New York: Zone Books.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2013/1988). *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Bloomsbury.

Della Rocca, M. (2008). Rationalism running amok: Representation and the reality of emotions in Spinoza. In: C. Huenemann (Ed.). *Interpreting Spinoza*. Cambridge: University Press.

Dennett, C.D. (1993/1991). *Consciousness Explained.* London: Penguin Books.

Descartes, R. (2000/1998). *Meditations.* London: Penguin.

Dewey, J. (1896). The Reflex Arc Concepts in Psychology. *Psychological Review, 3, 357-370.*

Dewey, J. (2012). *Human Nature and Conduct*. Digireads.com.

Durkheim, É. (1982). *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press.

Duvernoy, R.J. (2016). 'Pure experience' and 'planes of immanence': From James to Deleuze. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 30,* (4), 427-451.

Edwards, D. (1997). *Discourse and Cognition.* London: Sage.

Elias, N. (2000/1994). *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Elliott, H. & Squire, C. (2017). Narratives across media as ways of knowing. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *18,* (1), Art. 17.

Ellis, C. Adams, T.E., & Bochner, A.P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *12,* (1), Art.10.

Featherstone, M. & Burrows, R. (1995). *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk.* London: Sage.

Featherstone, M. & Turner, B.S. (1995). Body & society: An introduction. *Body & Society, 1,* (1), 1-12.

Finlay, L. (2014). Embodying research. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies, 13,* (1), 4-18.

Fløistad, G. (1972). Spinoza's theory of knowledge applied to the Ethics. In: S.P. Kashap (Ed.). *Studies in Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Forsyth, T.M. (1972). Spinoza's doctrine of God in relation to his conception of causality. In: S.P. Kashap (Ed.). *Studies in Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foucault, M. (1991/1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1998/1978). *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, vol. 1*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1992/1985). *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, vol. 2*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1990/1986). *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality, vol. 3*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (2002/1970). *The Order of Things.* London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (2002/1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982*. London: Routledge.

Frantzis, B. (2006/1993). *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Frantzis, B. (2006/2003). *Tai Chi: Health for Life*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Frantzis, B. (2010/2008). *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong (Vol 1).* Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Fraser, M. & Greco, M. (2005). *The Body: A Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fraser, M., Kember, S., & Lury, C. (2005). Inventive life: Approaches to the new vitalism. *Theory, Culture, & Society, 22,* (1), 1-14.

Gallese, V. (2005). Embodied simulation: From neurons to phenomenal experience. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 4*, 23-48.

Gallese, V. (2010). Embodied simulation and its role in intersubjectivity. In: T. Fuchs, H.C. Sattel, & P. Henningsen (Eds.). *The Embodied Self.* Stuttgart: Schattauer.

Ganeri, J. (2012). *The Self: Naturalism, Consciousness, and the First-Person Stance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garret (2010). Spinoza's theory of scientia intuitiva. In: T. Sorrell, G.A.J. Rogers, & J. Kraye (Eds.). *Scientia in Early Modern Philosophy*. New York: Springer.

Gendlin, E.T. (2003/1978). *Focusing*. London: Rider.

Giddens, (2004/1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Glanzer, D. (2014). Edge sensing as embodiment. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies, 13,* (1), 47-59.

Grainge, P. (2011). A song and dance: Branded entertainment and mobile promotion. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 15*, (2), 165-180.

Greco, M. (2005). On the vitality of vitalism. *Theory, Culture, & Society, 22*, (1), 15-27.

Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Grosz, E. (2011). *Becoming Undone.* London: Duke University Press.

Grosz, E. (2017). *The Incorporeal*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Guillemin, M. (2004). Understanding illness: Using drawings as a research method. *Qualitative Health Research, 14*, (2), 272-289.

Hallett, H.F. (1957). *Benedict de Spinoza*. London: The Athlone Press.

Hampshire, S. (1996). Introduction. In: B. Spinoza. *Ethics*. London: Penguin.

Haraway, D.J. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Associations Books.

Harris, A. & Guillemin, M. (2012). Developing sensory awareness in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 22,* (5), 689-699.

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, F., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, (18)*, 1, Art. 19.

Healy, K. (2017). Fuck nuance. *Sociological Theory, 35,* (2), 118-127.

Heidegger, M. (1977). The question concerning technology. In M. Heidgger. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row.

Heisig, J.W. (2001). *Philosophers of Nothingness*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Hemmings, C. (2005). Invoking affect: cultural theory and the ontological turn. *Cultural Studies, 19,* (5), 548-567.

Henriques, J. (2010). The vibrations of affect and their propagation on a night out on Kingston's dancehall scene. *Body & Society, 16*, (1), 57-89.

Henriques, J., Holloway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C. & Walkerdine, V. (1998/1984). *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity (2nd Edition).* London: Routledge.

Hsu, E. (2005). Tactility and the body in early Chinese medicine. *Science in Context, 18*, (1), 7-34.

Hsu, E. (2008). The senses and the social. *Ethnos, 73,* (4), 433-443.

Ilyenkov, E. (2014/1977). *Dialectical Logic.* Morrisville, NC: Lulu.com

Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive.* London: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2014). That's enough about ethnography! *Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 4*, (1), 383-395.

James, W. (1996/1912). *Essays in Radical Empiricism.* London: University of Nebraska Press.

Jennings, G. (Forthcoming). *Martial arts, health and society: Critical perspectives.* As part of the Martial Arts Studies book series. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

Johnson, J. (1988). Mixing humans and nonhumans together: The sociology of a door-closer. *Social Problems, 35,* (3), 298-310.

Jonas, H. (1965). Spinoza and the theory of organism. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 3,* (1), 43-57.

Kerr, C.E. (2002). Translating 'mind-in-body': Two models of patient experience underlying a randomized controlled trial of qigong. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 26,* (4), 419-447.

Kerr, C.E., Shaw, J.R., Wasserman, R.H., Chen, V.W., Kanojia, A., Bayer, T., &. Kelley, J.M. (2008). Tactile acuity in experienced tai chi practitioners: evidence for use dependent plasticity as an effect of sensory-attentional training. *Experimental Brain Research, 188*, (2), 317-322.

Kincheloe, J. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7,* (6), 679-692.

Kincheloe, J. (2005). On to the next level: Continuing the conceptualization of the bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11,* (3), 323-350.

Krueger, J.W. (2008). Knowing through the body: The Daodejing and Dewey. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 36,* (1), 31-52.

Krummel, J.W.M. (2012). Basho, world, and dialectics: An introduction to the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō. In: K. Nishida. *Place and Dialectic*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lærke, M. (2014). Spinoza's language. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 52*, (3), 519-548.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.

Lane, J.F. (2012). From '*Amor Fati*' to 'disgust': Affect, habitus, and class identity in Didier Eribon's Retour à Reims. *French Cultural Studies, 23*, (2), 127-140.

Laozi (2009). *Tao Te Ching*. London: Duncan Baird Publishers.

Lash, S. & Lury, C. (2007). *Global Culture Industry*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Latour, B. (2005/1999). On recalling ANT. In: J. Law & J. Hassard (Eds.). *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Law, J. (2009). Actor network theory and material semiotics. In: B.S. Turner (Ed.). *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Law, J. & Urry, J. (2004). Enacting the social. *Economy & Society, 33,* (3), 390-410.

Leder, D. (1990). *The Absent Body*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Lefebvre, H. (2013/2004). *Rhythmanalysis*. New York: Continuum.

Lenz, M. (2017). Whose freedom? The idea of appropriation in Spinoza's compatibilism. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung, 71,* (3), 343-357.

Leys, R. (2011). The turn to affect: A critique. *Critical Inquiry, 37,* (3), 434-472.

Levine, J. (1983). Materialism and qualia: the explanatory gap. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, 64*, 354-361.

LeVine, P. & Scollon, R. (2004). Multimodal discourse analysis as the confluence of discourse and technology. In: P. LeVine & R. Scollon (Eds.). *Discourse and Technology*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Lowry, A. C. (1979). The invisible world of Merleau-Ponty. *Philosophy Today, 23,* (4), 294-303.

Luhmann, N. (1986). The autopoiesis of social systems. In: F. Geyer & J. van der Zeuwen (Eds.). *Sociocybernetic Paradoxes*. London: Sage.

Lundy, C. (2012). *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Lury, C & Wakeford, N. (2012). Introduction: A perpetual inventory. In: C. Lury & N. Wakeford (Eds.). *Inventive Methods.* Oxon: Routledge.

Manning, E. (2010). Always more than one: The collectivity of a life. *Body & Society, 16*, (1), 117-127.

Massumi, B. (2002). *Parables for the Virtual.* London: Duke University Press.

Masunaga, S. & Ohashi, W. (2001/1977). *Zen Shiatsu*. Tokyo: Japan Publications.

Maturana H., & Varela, F.J. (1980/1972). *Autopoiesis and Cognition.* London: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Maturana H., & Varela, F.J. (1992/1987). *The Tree of Knowledge.* London: Shambhala.

McGilchrist, I. (2010/2009). *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World.* London: Yale University Press.

McGinn, C. (1997/1989). Can we solve the mind-body problem? In: N. Block, O. Flanagan, G. Guzeldere (Eds.). *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

McNay, L. (1999). Gender, habitus and the field: Pierre Bourdieu and the limits of reflexivity. *Theory, Culture, & Society, 16,* (1), 95-117.

Mears, A. (2017). Puzzling in sociology: On doing and undoing theoretical puzzles. *Sociological Theory, 35,* (2), 138-146.

Measham, F. (2004). The decline of ecstasy, the rise of 'binge' drinking and the persistence of pleasure. *The Journal of Community and Criminal Justice, 51*, (4), 309-326.

Mellor, P.A, & Shilling, C. (2014). *Sociology of the Sacred: Religion, Embodiment and Social Change*. London: Sage.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002/1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Oxon: Routledge.

Mol, A. (2002). *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mol, A. (2005/1999). Ontological politics. A word and some questions. In: J. Law & J. Hassard (Eds.). *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mol, A. & Law, J. (2004). Embodied action, enacted bodies. The example of hypoglycaemia. *Body & Society, 10,* (2-3), 43-62.

Morgan, M.L. (2002). Introduction. In: M.L. Morgan (Ed.). *Spinoza: Complete Works*. Cambridge: Hackett.

Morgan, M., McInerney, F., Rumbold, J., & Liamputtong, P. (2009). Drawing the experience of chronic vaginal thrush and complementary and alternative medicine. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 12,* (2), 127-146.

Mouzelis, N.P. (2008). *Modern and Postmodern Social Theorising*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nagatomo, S. (2006). *Yuasa Yasuo's theory of the body*. Delivered key note speech at Contemporary Japanese concept of the body, Symposium held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, England, June 5-6, 2006.

Naor, L. & Mayseless, O. (2017). How personal transformation occurs following a single peak experience in nature: A phenomenological account. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Jun 2017, 23.

Nettleton, S. (2010). The sociology of the body. In: W.C. Cockerham (Ed.). *The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Nishida, K. (1966/1958). The Unity of Opposites. In: K. Nishida. *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness: Three Philosophical Essays*. Honolulu: East-West Center Press.

Nishida, K. (2012) *Place and Dialectic.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Norris, S. (2004). Multimodal discourse analysis: A conceptual framework. In: P. LeVine & R. Scollon (Eds.). *Discourse and Technology*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Papadopoulos, D. (2011). The imaginary of plasticity: Neural embodiment, epigenetics and ectomorphs. *The Sociological Review, 59,* (3), 432-456.

Pedwell, C. (2014). *Affective Relations: The Transnational Politics of Empathy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pieper, J. (2009/1963). *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. San Francisco: Ignatius.

Pink, S. (2009). *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Porkert, M. (1979/1974). *The Theoretical Foundation of Chinese Medicine.* London: MIT.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour.* London: Sage.

Rice, L.C. (1971). Spinoza on individuation. *The Monist, 55,* (4), 640-659.

Rizzolatti, G., & Sinigaglia, C. (2008). *Mirrors in the Brain.* Oxford: University Press.

Ryan, A. (2008). Globalisation and the 'internal alchemy' in Chinese martial arts: The transmission of taijiquan to Britain. *East Asia Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal*, *2,* 525-543.

Savage, M. & Burrows, R. (2007). The coming crisis of empirical sociology. *Sociology, 4,* (5), 885-899.

Savan, D. (1972). Spinoza and language. In: S.P. Kashap (Ed.). *Studies in Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Saw, R.L. (1972). Personal identity in Spinoza. In: S.P. Kashap (Ed.). *Studies in Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sayer, R.A. (2005). *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sayer, R.A. (2006/2000). *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage.

Sayer, R.A. (2010). Reflexivity and the habitus. In: M.S. Archer (Ed.), *Conversations about Reflexivity*. Oxon: Routledge.

Shaviro, Steven (2009). *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Shear, J. (2000). Closing the empirical gap. In: J. Shear (Ed.). *Explaining Consciousness: The 'Hard Problem'*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2009). *The Corporeal Turn: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2011). Embodied minds or mindful bodies? A question of fundamental, inherently inter-related aspects of animation. *Subjectivity, 4,* (4), 451-466.

Shilling, C. (2004). Physical capital and situated action: A new direction for corporeal sociology. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 25,* (4), 473-487.

Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society.* London: Sage.

Shilling, C. (2007). Sociology and the body: Classical traditions and new agendas. *The Sociological Review, 55,* (s1), 1-18.

Shilling, C. (2008). *Changing Bodies*. London: Sage.

Shilling, C. (2012/1993). *The Body and Social Theory (3rd Edition).* London: Sage.

Shilling, C. (2017). Body pedagogics: Embodiment, cognition and cultural transmission. *Sociology, 51,* (6), 1-17.

Shilling, C. (2018). Embodying culture: Body pedagogics, situated encounters and empirical research. *The Sociological Review, 66,* (1), 75-90.

Shilling, C. & Mellor, P.A. (2007). Cultures of embodied experience: Technology, religion and body pedagogics. *The Sociological Review*, *55,* (3), 531-549.

Simondon, G. (1992). The genesis of the individual. In: J. Crary & S. Kwinter (Eds.). *Incorporations v. 6 (Zone 6)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Simondon, G. (2006/2001). *L'individuazione Psichica e Collettiva*. Roma: DeriveApprodi.

Sivin, N. (1979/1974). Introduction: Systems of correspondence in Chinese medicine. In: M. Porkert. *The Theoretical Foundation of Chinese Medicine.* London: MIT.

Smalheiser, M. (1989). The Inner form is the key to health. *T'ai Chi Magazine*, *Vol. 13*, No. 1, 2-5.

Spinoza, B. (1996/1994). *Ethics*. London: Penguin.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*, (6), 706-732.

Stenner, P. (2008). A.N. Whitehead and subjectivity. *Subjectivity, 22,* 90-109.

Stenner, P. (2011). James and Whitehead: Assemblage and systematization of a deeply empiricist mosaic philosophy. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, 3,* (1), 101-130.

Stenner, P. (2014). *In the zone: Liminal reflections*. Paper presented at Open University, London, England, February 19, 2014.

Stenner, P. & Greco, M. (2013). Affectivity. *Informática na Educação: Teoria e Prática*, 16, (1), 49-70.

Suchman, L. (2008). Feminist STS and the sciences of the artificial. In: E. Hackett, O. Amsterdamska, M. Lynch & J. Wajcman (Eds.). *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sulkunen, P. (2002). Between culture and nature: Intoxication in cultural studies of alcohol and drug use. *Contemporary Drug Problems, 29,* (2), 253-276.

Svendler Nielsen, C. (2009). Children's embodied voices: Approaching children's experiences through multi-modal interviewing. *Phenomenology & Practice, 3,* (1), 80-93.

Swann, C., Crust, L., Jackman, P., Vella, S.A., Allen, M.S., & Keegan, R. (2017). Performing under pressure: Exploring the psychological state underlying clutch performance in sport. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 35,* (23), 1-9.

Szmigin, I., Griffin, C., Mistral, W., Bengry-Howell, A., Weale, L., & Hackley, C. (2008). Re-framing 'binge drinking' as calculated hedonism: Empirical evidence from the UK. *International Journal of Drug Policy, 19*, (5), 359-366.

Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Thrift, N. (2007). *Non-Representational Theory.* London: Routledge.

Timeto, F. (2011). Diffracting the rays of technoscience: A situated critique of representation. *Poiesis Prax, 8,* 151-167.

Varela, F.J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1993/1991). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wacquant, L. (2006/2004). *Body & Soul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2013). Habitus as topic and tool: Reflections on becoming a prizefighter. In: R. Sánchez García & D.C. Spencer (Eds.). *Fighting Scholars*. London: Anthem.

Wacquant, L. (2014). Homines in extremis: What fighting scholars teach us about habitus. *Body & Society, 20,* (2), 3-17.

Wang, R.R. (2012). *Yinyang.* Cambridge: University Press.

Wayne, P.M. (2013). *Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi.* Boston: Shambhala.

Weber, J. (2006). From science and technology to feminist technoscience. In: K. Davies, M. Evans, & J. Lorber (Eds.). *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies*. London: Sage.

Wendt, A. (2015). *Quantum Mind and Social Science*. Cambridge: University Press.

Wetherell, M. (2012). *Affect and Emotion*. London: Sage.

Whitehead (1968/1938). *Modes of Thought*. New York: The Free Press.

Whitehead, A.N. (1985/1978). *Process and Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Williams, S.J., & Bendelow, G. (1998). Introduction. In: S.J. Williams & G. Bendelow (Eds.). *The Lived Body*. London: Routledge.

Winkler, S. (2016). The conatus of the body in Spinoza's physics. *Society and Politics, 10,* (2), 95-114.

Wolf, A. (1972). Spinoza's conception of the attributes of substance. In: S.P. Kashap (Ed.). *Studies in Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yuasa, Y. (1987). *The Body*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Yuasa, Y. (1993). *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy.* Albany, NY: State University of New York.

van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Varela, F.J. (2000). Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem. In: J. Shear (Ed.). *Explaining Consciousness: The 'Hard Problem'*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Velmans, M. (2009). *Understanding Consciousness (2nd Edition)* London: Routledge.

Venn, C. (2010). Individuation, relationality, affect: Rethinking the human in relation to the living. *Body & Society, 16*, (1), 129-161.

Zahavi, D. (1999). *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Zahavi, D. (2005). *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Zahavi, D. (2013/2011). The experiential self: Objections and clarifications. In: M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.). *Self, No Self?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Other sources

Allen-Sherwood, R. (2015). *Space sessions: Dr. Matthew Brewer (Part Two)* [viewed 28 July 2017]. Available from: http://stillmotionajourneyintospace.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/space-sessions-dr-matthew-brewer-part.html

Brisbane Chen Tai Chi (2016). *Chen style tai chi foundation* [viewed 8 August 2016]. Available from: https://brisbanechentaichi.weebly.com/skill-knowledge.html

British Sociological Association (2017). *Statement of ethical practice* [viewed 6 January 2018]. Available from: https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

Cavel, P. (2013). *Overview of the energy arts system by Paul Cavel of London* [viewed July 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDhyoNq-Y2A

de la Fuente, L. G. (2014). *Opening Dao: A documentary film on Taoism and martial arts* [viewed 22 June 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LaULzIYPZf8

Deleuze, G. (1978). *Lecture transcripts on Spinoza concept of affect* [viewed 18 February 2016]. Available from: https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/images-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-centres/centre-for-invention-and-social-process/deleuze_spinoza_affect.pdf

Energy Arts (2013a). *How to relax in tai chi* [viewed 6 June 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAAx6k81xF0

Energy Arts (2013b). *Common mistakes when practicing tai chi* [viewed 9 June 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UNqfeC9fjo

Energy Arts (2017). *Dragon and tiger theory & internal senses* [viewed 19 July 2017]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHZ6N9RjKhU&feature=youtu.be

Frantzis, B. (2012). *Journey into Taoism* [viewed 8 September 2016]. Available from: http://www.conscious.tv/text/65.htm

Frantzis, B. (admin@energyarts.com), 23 February, 2017. *Unique 2017 opportunities...* Email to V. Giovine (vg84@kent.ac.uk).

Hilty A. (2010). *Animus-anima, yin-yang* [viewed 30 January 2018]. Available from: https://drannehilty.wordpress.com/2010/03/14/animus-anima-yin-yang/

Kleiman, D. (2011a). *Accessing quiet awareness with Lee Burkins* [viewed 27 March 2017]. Available from: http://dankleiman.com/2011/06/30/accessing-quiet-awareness-with-lee-burkins/

Kleiman, D. (2011b). *How to practice qigong according to my wife* [viewed 10 July 2016]. Available from: http://dankleiman.com/2011/07/18/how-to-practice-qigong-according-to-my-wife/

Kleiman, D. (2011c). *How you practice what you practice* [viewed 9 July 2016]. Available from: http://dankleiman.com/2011/02/14/how-you-practice-what-you-practice/

Kleiman, D. (2012). *Straight lines, circles, and spheres.* [viewed 20 August 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_tjA9iYh5w

Kleiman, D. (2013a). *Outer dissolving and the role of the mind in standing qigong* [viewed 14 June 2016]. Available from: https://player.fm/series/qigong-radio-with-dan-kleiman/outer-dissolving-and-the-role-of-the-mind-in-standing-qigong

Kleiman, D. (2013b). *3 layers of neigong practice and Taoist meditation with Paul Cavel* [viewed 8 May 2016]. Available from: https://player.fm/series/qigong-radio-with-dan-kleiman/episode-16-3-layers-of-neigong-practice-and-taoist-meditation-with-paul-cavel

Kleiman, D. (2013c). *The how, what, and why of tai chi practice* [viewed 29 May 2016]. Available from: http://dankleiman.com/2013/02/10/the-how-what-and-why-of-tai-chi-practice/

Kleiman, D. (2013d). *3 layers of neigong practice and Taoist meditation with Paul Cavel* [viewed 10 May 2016]. Available from: http://dankleiman.com/2013/01/29/3-layers-of-neigong-practice-and-taoist-meditation-with-paul-cavel/

Kleiman, D. (2013e). *The 8 active ingredients of tai chi with Dr. Peter Wayne* [viewed 15 August 2016]. Available from: https://player.fm/series/qigong-radio-with-dan-kleiman/episode-18-the-8-active-ingredients-of-tai-chi-with-dr-peter-wayne

Kleiman, D. (2014a). *Chasing Secrets and Shortcuts in Taoist energy arts* [viewed 10 May 2016]. Available from: https://player.fm/series/qigong-radio-with-dan-kleiman/episode-20-chasing-secrets-and-shortcuts-in-taoist-energy-arts

Kleiman, D. (2014b). *Putting the mind inside the body with Cathy Kerr* [viewed 16 May 2016]. Available from: https://player.fm/series/qigong-radio-with-dan-kleiman/episode-8-putting-the-mind-inside-the-body-with-cathy-kerr

National Health Service (2015). *A guide to tai chi* [viewed January 2017]. Available from: https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/taichi.aspx

Neigong.net (2016a). *Movement and stillness* [viewed August 2016]. Available from: https://neigong.net/2016/02/26/movement-and-stillness/

Neigong.net (2016b). *Taijiquan – The art of receiving* [viewed August 2016]. Available from: https://neigong.net/2016/05/16/taijiquan-the-art-of-receiving/

Neigong.net (2016c). *Fang Ning on tai chi chuan kung-fu* [viewed August 2016]. Available from: https://neigong.net/2016/06/19/fang-ning-on-tai-chi-chuan-kung-fu-2/

Ryan, B. (2008). *The art of feeling chi* [viewed April 2016]. Available from: http://www.energyarts.com/art-of-feeling-chi

Shein, N. (2013). Spinoza's theory of attributes. In: E.N. Zalta (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2013 Edition).* Available from: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/spinoza-attributes/

Simon A.J. (2016a). *Tai chi's lifting water - The basic* [viewed 8 June 2016]. Available from: http://www.al-simon.com/video/First-Lesson/step1.php

Simon A.J. (2016b). *The ChiFusion™ approach to learning tai chi and qigong* [viewed 8 June 2016]. Available from: http://www.al-simon.com/video/First-Lesson/intro.php

Tangora, R. (2015). *Benefits of tai chi ch'uan* [viewed 25 August 2016]. Available from: http://tangorataichi.com/benefits-of-tai-chi/

Theosophical Society (2015). *Don Myers - Taoist neigong* [viewed 16 August 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2RLu9w4Kz0

Theosophical Society (2016). *Don Myers - From movement comes stillness* [viewed 16 August 2016]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GLfcQL8rYM

White Tiger Healing Arts (2018). *What pertains to the earth phase?* [viewed 30 January 2018]. Available from: http://www.sprucepineacupuncture.com/239818156

Wikipedia (2018). *Taijitu* [viewed 30 January 2018]. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taijitu

Zambrano, M. (2009). *Philosophy and poetry* [viewed 3 March 2015]. Available from: http://webshells.com/spantrans/Zambrano.htm